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ABSTRACT

This book contains 13 papers on the socioeconomic development, legal, gender, philosophical, and human rights dimensions of state governance within the context of social, economic, and political processes in Sierra Leone and Kenya. The Political Literacy and Civic Education (PLACE) Project, which was sponsored by the British Overseas Development Administration through the International Community Education Association, is credited with being the book's catalyst. The following papers are included: "Foreword" (S.K. Tororei); "Antecedents of the PLACE Project"; "Conceptualising Civic Education" (S.K. Tororei); "Reflections on Community Education" (Berewa R. Jommo); "Rationale for Political Literacy and Civic Education" (Ekundayo Thompson); "Purpose, Nature, and Scope of Civic Education" (Samuel K. Tororei); "The Development Context of Civic Education" (Ekundayo J.D. Thompson, Margaret Manley); "Civil Society and the Citizen" (Akie Wilson, Joe Sam-King); "Gender, Political Literacy and Civic Education" (Agnes Pessima); "The Constitution of Sierra Leone" (Solomon E. Berewa); "Democracy and the Rights of the Individual" (David G. Thompson); "Political Tolerance--A Prerequisite for Enhanced Democracy in a Multi-Party Environment" (Ahmed Ramadan Dumbuya); "Meaning and Nature of Government" (Walter N. Davies, Peter O. Koroma); "Politics, Political Literacy & Political Participation" (Edward D.A. Turay); "Curriculum for Civic Education" (Ekundayo J.D. Thompson, Joseph Simekha). (MN)

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GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC EDUCATION

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GOVERNANCE
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Acknowledgement

This book emerges from a series of activities which commenced in 1988, when staff and students of the Institute of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies (INSTADEX) left their university campus at Mount Aureol and descended into Kroo Bay, the largest urban slum in Freetown, Sierra Leone. By venturing into Kroo Bay, staff and students of INSTADEX were taking the university to the people and playing an important extra-mural role. To the staff and students of the class of 1988, I say, Bravo!

Thanks are due to the chiefs and people of Kroo Bay who, though sceptical about "another survey" especially by university people, cooperated in forging what has turned out to be a mutually beneficial relationship. The adult literacy class, which is now operational in Kroo Bay, evidences commitment to community development, and partnership between town and gown.

Without the financial support of the International Community Education Association (ICEA), and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (C.S. Mott) who provided the small grant of US $5000, the follow-up education and training needs survey in 1992 in Kroo Bay would not have been possible. Special thanks are due to Alan Blackhurst and Ann Stapley formerly of the ICEA International Office who facilitated the project.

What was started in 1988 climaxed in 1996. October 1996 marked the conclusion of the Political Literacy and Civic Education (PLACE) Project which received partial funding from the Overseas Development Administration (U.K.) through the International Community Education Association. We owe a debt of gratitude to ODA and ICEA, and to all those who assisted in seeing the project through in very difficult circumstances, namely, J.P.L. Sam-King who acted as the project coordinator in the absence of the project director, Chief Pa Alimamy Kamara, the facilitators, learners, members of the project sub-committee especially Ransford Myers of the Sociology Department, Fourah Bay College, Coleridge - Taylor and Professor Akintola Wyse, who superintended the affairs of INSTADEX, as acting directors, E.D.A. Turay the current director of INSTADEX, and the resource persons whose papers form a major part of this book. Our gratitude to the People's Educational Association of Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, the chairman and members of the Freetown City Council Committee of Management, Plan International, the chief librarian, Sierra Leone Library Board, the German Adult Education Association (DVV), The African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE), Syl Junor-Smith of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service, the staff of the Sierra Leone News Agency, and the members of the print media. The Centre for Governance and Development (Kenya)

initiated a civic education curriculum development process which resulted in a high level consultation on civic education.

The papers by Samuel K. Tororei (Moi University Kenya), Dr Ahmed Ramadan Dumbuya (Fourah Bay College) former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Solomon E.S. Berewa, Attorney General have been included with their permission. The paper by Berewa Jommo (African Community Education Network) provides the community education context in which the Political Literacy and Civic Education Project was implemented.

Foreword

Welcome to this exciting book which gives you the opportunity to explore and think about the role of Civic Education in the development of good governance in Africa.

The book is unique in several ways. Firstly, it is edited by a consummate author who has a wealth of experience in political literacy and civic education issues. Secondly, it is largely based on a practical grassroots project conducted by the University of Sierra Leone and draws its inspiration from the experience of the ordinary people of Kroo Bay Community Education and Development Network, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Thirdly, it is written at a time when Africa is actively searching for a political and economic identity; a time when strong winds of change are blowing across the continent in different directions; a time when the people of Africa need to, and must make informed decisions and choices on which current to embrace.

Strong winds of change? Yes! Attempts at democratization have grown steadily in this decade and have taken many forms. These forms range from the positive experiences in South Africa which achieved a peaceful transition from apartheid to democratic rule, the experiences of the Great Lakes region which witnessed unprecedented Genocide, the happenings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) where a popular armed rebellion helped remove a long-time dictator, to the experiences in Sierra Leone where a military coup has just reversed the country's march to democracy. Add to these the milder changes in Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and the brewing pots of Congo - Brazzaville and Liberia.

It is argued that knowledge is power. If this be so, it follows that civic education is the key that would open the door to the right choice for the people of Africa.

Yet, sceptics argued that education has little impact if any on the continent's political development. They say Africa's political development will be dictated by the financial muscle of the West whose interests have little regard to the plight of Africa and its peoples.

Precisely because of this, Africa needs to enlighten itself to be able to cope with the demands of the West. Africa is manipulated because the majority of its peoples are ignorant even of their basic human rights. This ignorance translates into weak policies characterised by a wide gap separating the governing from the governed. In turn this dicotomy leads to dictactorial tendencies by the ruling elite and despondency by the citizenry. The end result is a loss of faith by the peoples in their government.

One sure way of reversing this trend is through enlightening both the ordinary citizen

and the ruling elite. On the one hand the citizenry must be assisted to understand its role as the maker and the unmaker of its Government and on the other the ruling elite must be assisted to understand that they are accountable to the citizenry who in many cases gave them power in the first instance.

Who then needs this book?

- Holders of political power because they must exercise power responsibly and accountably.
- Political parties because they form a foundation of political choice.
- The political citizen because he/she must be made aware of the cost of political inaction or dis-interest.
- The ordinary person, in a word all of us, because in each individual lies the burden of political choice and destiny, a reality from which we cannot escape.

This book is compulsory reading for all serious civic educators and civic education practitioners in Africa. It is the educator and practitioner who must interprete the issues of the moment and assist the continent to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities facing us. Through their writings, workshops or other forms of communication, the educator and practitioner become the bridge between the people and the body of knowledge that is civic education. This book has put under one cover most of the central issues that engage the mind and practice of these professionals and has done this from a practical and local perspective.

A rich civic education book - if one there ever was!

S.K. Tororei

Antecedents of The Place Project

The successful implementation of the Political Literacy and Civic Education (PLACE) Project in Sierra Leone, was the culmination of a process of community education. The process was initiated by the people of Kroo Bay, and the Institute of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies (INSTADEX) Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in 1988. The encounter between INSTADEX and Kroo Bay set in motion a series of educational activities which have resulted in the publication of this book.

In 1988, the staff and students of INSTADEX undertook a needs assessment survey (NAS) in Kroo Bay. The objective of the survey was to offer the students an opportunity to have hands-on-experience in needs identification as part of their course requirement in "Organization and Administration of Adult Education Programmes". It was essentially an academic exercise aimed at providing the students with practical experience and to illustrate the fact that problem and needs identification and analysis are both prerequisites for, and integral parts of programme planning. The objectives and process of the survey have been documented in *From Mount Aureol to Kroo Bay: Assessing Needs for Programme Planning and Freetown Urban Slum Dwellers: Their Problems and Needs.* Among the felt needs expressed was the need for education for the majority of the non-literate residents - out of school adults and adolescent children.

In addition to the needs identified was an expression of partnership between Kroo Bay and INSTADEX which resulted in the formation of the Kroo Bay Community Education and Development Network (Kroo Bay CEDNET). It was under the aegis of the Kroo Bay CEDNET that a proposal for an education and training needs survey was articulated and elaborated. The survey was undertaken in 1992 with financial support from the International Community Education Association (ICEA) under its Small Grants Programme.

Community Involvement

The participatory nature of the survey necessitated training of the members of the Kroo Bay community in the processes of participatory research. To that end, a task force of the Kroo Bay Community Education and Development Network organized a participatory training workshop for data collection in March 1992.

The following components formed part of the workshop programme:

- Discussion of the Concept and Practice of Participatory Training and Research
- Participatory Problem Identification and Analysis
- Development of Survey Instruments

This workshop was strategic in the sense that it equipped the participants with the tools, both conceptual and practical, and skills of participatory research which were deployed during the Education and Training Needs Survey in March 1992.

The Education and Training Needs Survey

The general objective of the survey was to identify the education and training needs of the Kroo Bay community. The specific objectives were:

- to identify and analyse the education, training and other needs of the Kroo Bay community;
- to enlist the participation of the people in needs identification and analysis;
- to use the identified needs as a basis for the design of an education and training programme.

Underpinning the study were the following assumptions:

- it is possible to study the education and training needs of the Kroo Bay community jointly with the local population on the basis of equality;
- there is no previous education and training programmes that were specifically designed for the residents of Kroo Bay;
- the productive members of the Kroo Bay community did not know the type of education and training programmes that would improve their productivity;
- members of the Kroo Bay community are ready and willing to participate in education and training activities geared to their development and would make use of such facilities if made available.

Overcoming Resistance

According to the report on the survey, one of the problems which had to be surmounted was the apparent resistance by members of the Kroo Bay community who pointed out that they were tired of being used as objects of study by outsiders whose pre-occupation was their own self-interest and who seemed to care less about the circumstances of the local population. Given the number of previous studies in the Bay apparently without

any feedback or result in practical terms, the resistance of the people seemed natural.

The partnership which had been established between INSTADEX and Kroo Bay and which had been given practical expression in the Kroo Bay Community Education and Development Network evidenced the mutuality of interest. Kroo Bay CEDNET was a community organization which represented the interests of both INSTADEX and the Kroo Bay people. The training and involvement of the Kroo Bay community members in the survey enhanced confidence in the value of the exercise and commitment to its successful realization.

Essential Learning Needs

According to the survey report

The essential learning needs in this community include the acquisition of functional knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy for raising a family, operating a household and earning a living. Literacy is required as a tool for the dissemination of written development messages on environmental sanitation, public health care, population issues, home management, youth and leadership training.

1

Conceptualising Civic Education

S K Tororei

Civic education programmes and civic education practitioners should take cognisance of the fact that Africa's political and economic development are entrenched in a turbulent past. The African political and economic scene reflects Africa's search for political and economic identity; the need to build nation-states out of varied ethnic cultural groups; the desire to achieve commonality among disparate interests and the necessity to share space within arbitrary borders by peoples who had no desire to do so in the first instance.

The challenge to the civic education practitioner is immense. The practitioner is in the unique position of interpreter of contemporary issues in such a manner as to be understood by the ordinary citizen; disseminator of worthwhile civic education messages that would empower the citizenry to take affirmative action to improve their political and economic wellbeing; and a bridge between the perceptions and actions of the elite and those of the majority ordinary citizens.

Is Civic Education Politically Neutral?

Civic education is a political intervention which seeks to enhance the citizens' participation in their governance. To do this, civic education assists them to understand the processes, values, and systems by which they are governed and the means by which they can affect those processes, values and systems. Civic education is therefore a positive political intervention.

Does this then mean that civic education is necessarily partisan? Not at all. Political neutrality simply means that actions are taken on the basis of issues rather than for the benefit of political interest groups. Political parties actively seek and compete for political power. They do this by championing causes which may not necessarily reflect the needs of all sections of society. They also use methods which tend to maximize

opportunism and pragmatism and go for short-term political gains. They slant information about themselves so as to give a "good" public image of themselves. This information is usually economical with the truth, coloured with a good amount of lies and full of false promises. Such information is propaganda, not civic education.

Components of Civic Education

Civic education is a relatively new body of knowledge. It is sometimes confused with voter education and other aspects of education. Civic education comprises of the following:

- Voter education
- Political literacy
- Rights education
- Education in democracy
- Peace Education
- Development education

Voter Education

Voter education concerns itself with the election process. It seeks to enlighten the citizenry on the need to vote, how to vote, when and why to do so. It does NOT concern itself with who to vote for!

Political Literacy

Political literacy aims at understanding the ways in which politics is practised in the country. It seeks to assist the citizenry to understand and operate the political system, to appreciate their political culture and to influence their political development.

Rights Education

Rights education emphasizes the central role of individual and collective rights in the life of individuals and communities. It seeks to assist the citizenry to understand, appreciate, recognize and protect the rights of the individual, the minorities, special interest groups and nations.

Education in Democracy

Education in democracy has as its core the study of democracy as a desired way of life for a country. It urges that the citizenry must understand the practice and tenets of democracy in order to enhance the quality of their governance.

Peace Education

Peace education expresses the cardinal principle that humanity must live in, and share the planet in peace and harmony since there is no other habitat for it. It is based on the fundamental realization that, to paraphrase UNESCO, since it is in the minds of people that war is made, it is in these minds that the bastions of peace must be built. Peace education seeks to build these bastions by inculcating a culture of tolerance and respect for each other by all men and women and a total abhorence of the use of war and other forms of force to resolve disputes. It stresses the value and virtue of mediation in peace-making.

Development Education

Development education puts issues of development at the centre. It argues that the citizenry must be empowered through acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills that help them interact positively with their environment so that they can achieve maximum benefits and attain the highest possible improvement in their wellbeing.

Running through all the components of civic education and underlining the philosophy of civic education is the assumption that people must respect and care for the environment (social, economic, physical, spiritual) for it is from the environment that humanity expresses and sustains its existence, and claims its identity.

In this context the environment is understood to comprise the entire universe and its relations to human activity, endeavour and needs. Consequently, it must be protected and nutured through responsible use and conservation of all resources. This calls for conscious informed civic action globally.

Some Central Concepts in Civic Education

At the center of the civic education process lies fundamental political and economic concepts which must be understood by the civic education practitioner. Below are a few examples.

Power

Central to any discussion of governance is the issue of the exercise of power. Generally power is said to be either hard or soft.

Hard power exists where force is used or threatened to make a person do something against his/her will. This is called coercion. It is the kind of power usually employed by authoritarian or dictatorial governments.

Soft power lies in the use of persuasion to gain compliance. It relies on the ability and knowledge of the user and the perceived value of this knowledge by the recipient.

A system of governance is generally charged good or bad depending on whether or not it is able to use power in a manner seen as beneficial to the majority.

Governance

Everyday we hear that Africa must achieve good governance in order to be eligible for international support. Seldom are we told what this means. Governance may be defined as the agreed way by which a society accepts to be governed.

Governance therefore implies a social contract between the citizenry and those in authority over them. Good governance implies that this arrangement works to the benefit of the citizenry.

Democracy

Democracy is a form of government popularly said to be for the people, of the people, by the people. It can be traced to the days of the Greek city state where all free men sought consensus on all matters affecting them. Later as nations grew larger and it became impossible to put together all citizens, this form of government was modified so that citizens in a given locality sent one among them to represent them in assemblies of representatives of other localities.

What we have today is known as representative democracy. Representation is decided through various ways. The two most important ways of representation are the American and the British.

The American system requires that the functions of the representatives be spelt out in the constitution. The British system relies on tradition rather than the constitution to define the function of the representative.

Africa is caught up in between these two models. Many African countries use a mixture of the American and British methods of representation and therefore display varying shades of democracy.

In the 1990s Africa has increasingly embraced plural or multi-party politics. This means that the choice of representation is made on the basis of parties rather than individuals, each political party competes for support expressed in terms of number of votes and number of representatives mustered. The winning party is that which gets the highest number of representatives. It is usually the winning party which is asked to form the government in this type of democracy. This political culture may be described as competitive or adversarial.

Representation is achieved through regular periodic elections, where each mature citizen is required to vote. Voting involves a number of things, most important of which is the casting of a ballot marked in favour of a candidate and put in a sealed box. This method is called a secret ballot.

People elected during an election form what is generally known as the National Assembly.

Unique African Experiences in Democracy

As already noted, Africa displays various shades of democracy. What is described in the earlier section may be referred to as western models. Since the mid 80s Africa developed a home-grown form of "democracy" styled "movementocracy". In the 90s Africa developed another form of "democracy" styled "Government of national unity".

Movementocracy grew out of the jungles of the Luwero triangle, Uganda, where the then guerilla leader, Yoweri Museveni, fashioned a political strategy to mobilize the general population to his support. This came to be known as the resistance movement. It is organized from grassroots to the national level and has proved fairly effective so far.

The main characteristics of movementocracy is that no political parties are allowed. Only the movement exists and gives expression to national political life. The movement forms the government and the national assembly. The movement sets the national, political, social and economic agenda. All this is enshrined in the current Uganda constitution which stipulates that the status quo shall remain unchanged for the next five years.

Governments of national unity are becoming popular in Africa because they are seen as unifying in times of national crises. The Republic of South Africa so far gives the best example of how a government of national unity operates.

The main characteristic of this form of government is that the majority party invites other parties to join it in forming the government so that in effect there is no opposition. However, any political party wishing to leave may do so and will be allowed to become an opposition party.

Both these forms of democracy emphasise accommodative rather than competitive or adversarial politics. Their proponents argue that competitive politics have proved divisive in Africa where political parties are generally formed along tribal lines. Accommodation is thus regarded as a remedy.

Opponents vehemently argue that these forms of representation cannot be regarded as democracies since they are basically one-party dictatorships. They charge that

dissenting views cannot be expressed in a climate which allows one dominant political force to exist. They cite Africa's experience under one-party regimes which they judge were largely monolithic and dictatorial.

This debate will go on for sometime, but it is important to note that Africa is searching for a workable home-grown democratic model. This search should be supported, not condemned.

The Constitution

The Constitution is a written set of rules establishing the state and defining and asigning powers and functions for the governance of the state. This concept is derived from the American model. The British have no written Constitution. Subsequent chapters will discuss this concept with Sierra Leone as a case example. It is sufficient to note here that the constitution separates the powers of the institutions and instruments of state and gives expression to the existence of civil society through the bill of rights.

Civil Society

Civil society is composed of organized units of society above the family and below the state. These units do not directly engage in the function of the government of the state. So they exclude such organizations as the police, civil service, the armed forces.

Civil society is based on the principle that the good governance of the state is dependent upon support of civil institutions such as religious organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and professional organizations acting independently of, and separate from the state.

Civic Education Methodology

At this stage it is important to recognize the fact that civic education must have specific methodology. Civic education must pass certain messages, information, knowledge, attitudes and skills to the people effectively if it hopes to influence their behaviour.

The methodology generally adopted is that used in adult and community education. It seeks to interest and capture attention of adult learners as individuals and as members of their communities usually in informal or non-formal settings.

2

Reflections On Community Education*

Bereiwa R. Jonnio

The Crisis

African countries find themselves gripped in a pattern of failure. Most of them are suffering from an unprecedented scale of political and economic malaise. The optimism of the 1960s has now turned into gloom, and the future prospects look bleak.[1]

This observation was made more than ten years ago by the Special Committee on Africa, a think tank of eminent scholars who came together, under the aegis of the United Nations University, to deliberate on the nature of the multiple crises facing Africa south of the Sahara.

During that period, all attention was riveted on Africa. Horrendous scenes of mass starvation in Ethiopia filled television screens around the world. The crises of hunger, massive indebtedness, economic collapse and ecological death culminated in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Africa (August, 1986). Here Africa's leaders were humiliated into tacit admission of complicity in the evolving crises.

The tragic irony is that, in the mid 80s, Africa had not yet seen the worst. The beginning of the 90s has seen the virtual disintegration of some states - politically, economically and socially. Fratricidal violence has brought about the direct intervention of (ostensibly peace-making) foreign troops, thus rendering a mockery of one of the fundamental principles in the OAU Charter on sovereignty and the sanctity of borders.

Looking back at the three decades of post-independence Africa, we observe that in the first decade the leaders were at one with the people. The people, brimming over with euphoria on seeing the lowering of the white man's flag and the raising of a "national" flag, looked up to a leadership that had delivered them from the shackles of colonial rule. Several of those leaders, led by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, were visionary.

They tried to consolidate independence by devising ways of realising the higher goals of pan-Africanism and regional unity. Some gigantic steps, such as the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Federation were taken towards overcoming the language fragmentation created by European predatory colonialism. Common services inherited from colonialism were advanced into economic communities, as in the case of the East African Community. Ultimately, at the time of its inception - even with all the compromises watering down its revolutionary potential - the Organization of African Unity (OAU) gave high hopes for the resurgence of a great Africa.

The 70s could be characterized as the decade when the pedestals came tumbling down: when the leadership and the people started to part company. The ruling elites set about the business of consolidating power by marginalising the bulk of their people. Like boys with toys, they whimsically discarded regional arrangements, along with the rhetoric on people-centred development. Governance was revealed to be a mechanism for the power-elites to amass fortunes and satisfy expensive egos, emptying state coffers in the process. All pretences at democratic rule were discarded. Using the 'national unity' imperative, demagogic mono-party rule was ushered in. Elsewhere, illegitimate civilian governments were overthrown by men with guns. Monstrous military rule dug in, plundering already diminishing resources, indiscriminately killing, maiming and incarcerating the citizenry. The most enterprising segments of the population crossed borders to seek political and economic asylum. The remainder were cowed into silence. For the countries affected, the brain drain and brain waste represented by these movements and repression did, or even surpassed, the damage in socio-economic development caused by the ignominious slave trade.

In the 80s the crises were aggravated, even as experts of every description churned out prescriptions for ways out. The Ethiopia famine found a tragic repetition in the Sudano-Sahelian belt and Mozambique. Dictators were overthrown but the butchering did not stop. As the 80s gave way to the 90s, Africa seemed to have lost its head in the intractability of its problems. The despots easily preferred turning their fiefdoms into killing fields rather than giving in to mounting internal and external pressure for political accommodation and pluralism. The world has since watched in bewildered helplessness as Africans butcher each other with indescribable ferocity. In the process, economies have crumbled and the so-called nation-states have literally disintegrated.

People's Responses

This is the scenario which formed the backdrop for the explosion on the development

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scene of people's own initiatives. By 1990 (in Arusha), African civil society organizations had already covered sufficient ground to elaborate the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation*. Their action was motivated by the observation that the continent was still engulfed in a crisis

> *of unprecedented and unacceptable proportions, manifested not only in abysmal declines in economic indicators of trends, but more tragically and glaringly in the suffering, hardship and impoverishment of the vast majority of African people. At the same time the political context of socio-economic development has been characterized ... by an over-centralization of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development.*[2]

All over the continent, people got tired and disillusioned by the governments' obvious lack of ability and capacity to provide answers, and started to take matters into their own hands.

The NGOs in Arusha informed the world that they were ready to seize the initiative

> *to establish independent people's organizations at various levels that are genuinely grassroots, voluntary, democratically administered, self-reliant and that are rooted in the tradition and culture of the society to ensure community empowerment and self-development.*[3]

In a few cases, there have been riots. But it is generally a mark of the 'African way of doing things' that, underneath what Western analysts perceive as complacency, passivity and fatalism, there is iron-will determination to overcome hardship and survive in dignity. Everywhere, without fanfare or fuss, people have been modifying kinship ties, neighbourhood relationships, generational, gender-specific and occupational co-operatives, in order to meet the new challenges in their lives. Notable examples of such initiatives which have attained national proportions and international recognition are the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and the Six-S and NAAM Associations of Burkina Faso and ANID (Association for Integrated Development) of Senegal. However, up and down the continent, there are literally hundreds of thousands of groups involved in securing their survival or improving the quality of life of their members and communities.

Clearly, then, the 90s is the era for the consolidation of the people's grassroots

movements, as an integral part of the general democratisation process. Failure to move in that direction will result in a generalised sense of deception and frustration, as one after the other of the initiatives flounder or get hijacked by the older crop of despotic politicians now appearing in the guise of campaigners for political pluralism.

Whither Community Education?

Empowerment is variously defined as the 'process of building capacities, of creating an environment which enables people to fully utilise their creative potential in pursuance of a quality of life that is both human and humane' (J.D. Ekundayo Thompson), and 'deepening and popularising the democratisation process' (Berewa R. Jommo).

As a component of the grassroots movement, community education should provide scope for exploring and building on local collective wisdom, innovative and creative capacities. It should be defined by the space available to the communities to explore alternative, self-reliant models of development, that is, to respond to their needs through collective self-based, self-driven and self-controlled initiatives.

From participatory research on existing community-based development initiatives, it is clear that the communities are not waiting for hand-outs. They are in the process of shaping their own destinies. This is self-reliance; a concept and a mobilising tool for development. However, self-reliance in this context does not imply the all-embracing dogmatic principle which includes 'de-linking' from the exploitative 'international' economic order, or political autarchy. Rather, it is the interpretation of the perceived tendencies of poor communities to pool their meagre resources (intellectual, labour and material) in order to meet their survival and developmental needs. The concept is captured in the Kiswahili idiomatic expression: *Haba na baba bujaza kibaba* (Little by little fill up the measure) or in the concept of *Harambee*. *Harambee*, or pulling together, is as old as African traditional social organization - which is anchored in solidarity (mutual aid, reciprocity). If such practices were to take place, in accordance with specific demands, zonally, sectorially, socio-culturally, politically and economically, in reviewing the past and in planning for the future, then we would be heading towards a new era of African self-reliant development.

> *The ideal we need is a harmonised co-operative world in which each part is a centre, living at the expense of nobody else, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations.*[4]

This calls for inspired and visionary leadership, across the board. Until then, and as a minimal requirement, governments, educationists, industrialists, entrepreneurs and the community of nations at large are being challenged to build long-term support mechanisms for these efforts, without destroying the self-reliant nature of the initiatives. Rajesh Tandon, observing the Indian experience, has noted:

> *Experience has indicated that many such initiatives exist for a decade or less. Their institutional mechanisms and frameworks, their leadership and its continuity, the infrastructure and funding, does not allow them to maintain a longevity either beyond a founder or beyond an immediate period. It is imperative that we create conditions for contemporary initiatives to become "social models" for a future generation of youngsters who may look up to such individuals and institutions as possible avenues for expression for their own social commitment and engagement.*[5]

Gender-blind Empowerment Disempowers

In Africa, women make up the bulk of learners in community-based adult education (as opposed to workplace-based initiatives such as the Takoradi Functional Literacy Project). On the other hand, they are conspicuously scarce in the leadership of the adult education movement. This is the level at which issues are problematised and solutions and approaches articulated. Women are therefore at the receiving end of packaged information that may profoundly impact on their lives, but in which the specificities of their situation have largely been drawn up for them - not by, and often times not even with them.

Thus, the Adansua (Ghana) project, which appears to be an inspired effort to infuse income-generating capacity into a women's group, will be supervised by the male-dominated leadership of the Ghana Reading Association. The women have reportedly 'taken up the challenge' to 'liberate themselves from poverty and ignorance'.

It would however be interesting to get a glimpse of their own informed perception of the impediments to development and their solutions.

On the other hand, even gender-sensitive initiatives sometimes fall short of seriously addressing women's concerns. For instance, the Institute of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone used gender-desegregated questionnaires to establish skills training needs in the Kroo Bay community. The survey revealed that men would normally have acquired skills in

engineering, middle level and business/trading (in that descending order), on which they needed improvement. Women, who constituted 53.5% of the labour force, were found to have limited training in the categories 'Business/trading' and 'Income generating', a distinction which is anyway amorphous. The researchers have analysed their data carefully and made strong recommendations that 'consideration be given to the areas of training needs identified by the survey'.[6]

These are serious research findings which may form the basis for the kind of intervention which seeks to transform the lives of women. For that reason, they deserve close scrutiny. Issues of groundwork arise. We must remember that women's responses are mediated by their location in the socio-economic structure. A well-informed, sensitized community where the social dynamics have undergone some modifications may bring out altogether different responses. To illustrate, the Kroo Bay Community women expressed an interest in enhancing and commercialising skills which are largely an extension of their domestic chores (dress-making, baking, hairdressing), or lighten the drudgery of those chores (soap-making, gara dyeing, home economics, clothing and textiles, food and nutrition). On the other hand, the women of the Community Development Centre Kinoo (Kenya) were emphatic that there should be no gender biases in skills-training for the manufacture of donkey carts, nappier grass shredders and improved cookstoves. They especially wished to have young female school-leavers trained as welders, fitters and joiners.

Thus, it is important not only to gender-sensitise research but also to sensitize women on gender relations. This calls for pre-research groundwork which will ensure informed participation by all the interlocutors - what Patricia Maguire refers to as 'adjusting the lens'.[7]

In addition, and at the risk of the inevitable accusations of 'reverse discrimination', one really must affirm the duty of African women researchers to interpret to the world the complexities of African gender relations, and to raise the indicative flags towards women's empowerment. Since 'the wearer of the shoe knows best where it pinches', women researchers usually articulate different insights, or make a more insightful analysis of women's realities. For instance, based on a study of the informal sector in Freetown, Clarice Davies concludes:

> *Because women cannot get employment in the formal sector as easily as men, they dominate the informal sector. Women usually have to combine their productive and reproductive roles. Income generating activities like trading,*

cookery and such are popular because they are more compatible to the role of a mother and wife. Since the more lucrative informal sector activities require more capital and skills, women tend to stick to activities in the informal sector which are easy to run and have very little overheads.[8]

Hence, Davies draws attention to the Abuja Declaration's recommendation that women's informal sector activities be supported 'with clear policies aimed at ensuring greater linkages with the rest of the economy and increasing its productivity, which in turn will have a positive impact on the overall gross domestic product'.[9]

The point being made here is that community empowerment requires an informed approach to holistically illuminate the specificities of the constituent parts of the community.

The Challenge to African Practitioners

Both Asiamah (Ghana) and Ekundayo Thompson (Sierra Leone) have suggested that community education is not new to Africa; the traditional society has always practised one form or another of community education or, rather, the forms of traditional social organization, division of labour and socio-economic production and reproduction easily lend themselves to definition as community education. Thompson also asserts that,

historically, indigenous community organizations played an important role in community development; community development had tremendous potential for community education.

Indeed, the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) has for a long time grappled with how to effectively situate itself in the unfolding clarity of purpose, assertiveness and innovativeness as people at the grassroots address their situation. For AALAE's predecessor, the African Adult Education Association (AAEA), the overriding perception was that of the educator, the community leader, as the 'change agent'. Even then, the 8th Biennial Conference of the AAEA (Cote d'Ivoire, March 1983), with 'Community Education : Issues for Adult Educators' as its theme, draws the conclusion that:

Community education in the African context means reverting to the past approaches of community involvement and focusing on community issues as

the basis for education and training. It means breaking down the barriers between school and community and allowing the knowledge and skills fostered within these "formal" structures to pervade the community and contribute towards its development'.[10]

As we delve into the same issues of African under-development, poverty and marginalisation, there is a perceptible conceptual shift as we recognize the fact that change and transformation will only effectively occur through the efforts of the communities themselves. They must be their own change agents. We are called upon to work with them towards releasing and mobilising all the human, intellectual and material resources at their disposal for their development.

Therefore, as a partnership between intellectuals and people at the grassroots, community education poses some very real challenges to professionals (facilitators/educators, development workers and intellectuals). These may be articulated in three inter-linked ways:

That the professional perceives the relationship as, and actively works to promote, the space for mutually enriching learning experiences; that the professional actively promotes the idea that no one is indispensable except the community; that the professional does not expropriate leadership but ensures sustainability of the initiatives through infusion of enduring support mechanisms of all sorts (material, technical, moral and intellectual).

Given the dearth of databases which can serve the fundamental interests of Africa, researchers are challenged to undertake investigations that can objectively root community education in the African traditional experience and knowledge. In this, we need to avoid the pitfalls of romanticisation, particularly in regard to social relations and the status and roles of women, whereby everything in pre-colonial African society is deemed to have been wonderful and good. On the other hand, we need to unearth knowledge systems and content that must be preserved in order to give community education the necessary motive power as a transformatory tool. We must discover and reactivate the knowledge, sciences and technologies that sustained African environments, and which have been smothered by the enduring colonial experience.

African professionals must take the lead in systematising critical analysis and debates that will shape the sort of conceptual tools which can help move community education from isolated group initiatives to a mass movement for genuine, African people-centred democracy and community empowerment.

Finally, one is persuaded by Ekundayo Thompson's statement that:

Empowerment is about participation which is genuine, it is about freedom to act, it is about ownership and control, it is about knowledge which is power - the power of the people.

*NOTE

This paper was first published by the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE). It was also published by the International Community Education Association (ICEA) in *Community Education International*, February 1996, pp 3 - 6.

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3

Rationale for Political Literacy and Civic Education

EKUNDAYO THOMPSON

The overthrow of the All People's Congress (APC) one-party Government by the military in 1992 worsened the socio-economic and political situation in Sierra Leone. The civil war which was started to remove the APC government from power led to the deterioration of an already bad situation. Consequently, the need for good governance became a felt need. It was argued that if there was good governance a military coup d'etat would not have been necessary. The design of the Political Literacy And Civic Education Project (PLACE) was, therefore, a response to the need for good governance in Sierra Leone through educational measures.

Political literacy and civic education is part of the overall strategy of education as a major instrument for economic and social development. Education as a strategy for economic and social development is founded on a number of assumptions. First, investment in education leads to accumulation of human capital. Accumulation of human capital results in sustained economic growth and increasing incomes. Second, education increases productivity, reduces fertility, improves health and equips people with the skill to participate in the economy and society. Third, education contributes to the strengthening of the institutions of civil society, to national capacity building and to good governance. Fourth, education contributes to economic growth both through increased individual productivity brought about by the acquisition of skills and attitudes and through the accumulation of knowledge.

It is argued that civic education is essential for promoting and sustaining good governance without which sound economic and social policies can neither be articulated nor implemented. What is more, the move towards democratization, political pluralism, and trade liberalisation necessitates people's participation especially at the grassroots where the process of development begins. Without civic education people's participation will be hamstrung.

Project Design

It was in the context of economic, social and political development that the Political Literacy and Civic Education Project was designed. The project proposal stated that,

> *Political literacy and civic education is essential not only for an understanding of the country's economic system but also for effective participation in the political process.*

Functional political literacy was defined as "the utilisation of literacy and numeracy skills for participation in the political process".

The design of the project took account of the need to sensitize and mobilize the Kroo Bay community. To that end, a project sub-committee of the Kroo Bay CEDNET was established with the mandate of implementing the project.

The Kroo Bay Community Education and Development Network (Kroo Bay CEDNET)

The idea to form a community education and development network was mooted during the community needs assessment survey of 1988. A network was preferred because it would be a mechanism for:

- generating ideas and sharing information;
- facilitating a process for community problem solving;
- creating a climate for the free expression of opinions and views on matters relating to education and community development;
- systematising the management of community education and development projects in Kroo Bay.

Implementation of the Project

Fundraising

Implementation of the project was preceded by fundraising. Through the International Community Education Association (ICEA), the U.K. Overseas Development Administration (ODA) offered to provide 50% of the total cost of the project under its Joint Funding Scheme (JFS). ODA's expression of intent to provide half of the project cost was preceded by a process which generated a number of critical issues. These

included:

- Possible cultural or religious barriers to women's participation given that Kroo Bay is predominantly a muslim community.
- Use of the English language and its implications for bias towards participants who can speak and understand English.
- Sustainability: Mechanisms to sustain the literacy programme after the project.
- Tangible economic benefits for the participants.
- Role and qualifications of consultants.

The project was implemented inspite of the prevailing difficult political and economic situation in Sierra Leone. The military misrule and the rebel war brought about untold suffering psychologically, economically and socially on the people, while destruction and death had become the natural order of things. In the meantime people became increasingly aware of the need for good governance and of their role in bringing it about.

Project implementation meetings, training seminars and workshops reinforced the need for good governance and discussed the consequences of bad governance, examples of which were legion. Although the environment was unfavourable for implementing the project, with the benefit of hindsight it could not have been implemented at a more propitious time - the time was right! By the time the project came to an end, the soldiers had taken their exit and Sierra Leone had returned to civil rule by the power of the people. The project could have played a part in raising awareness on the need for good governance and how it could have been brought about. The people's response to the military coup of May 25th, 1997 evidenced the tremendous power which they wield.

The Project Process

The process of implementing the project was an exercise in community education. Community resources were mobilized and utilized to achieve the objectives of the project. Since training was an important part of the process, training workshops were organized for the facilitators and the learners (residents of Kroo Bay) to enable them participate in the curriculum and instructional development processes. In addition to curriculum issues (content and methodology) ethical issues were addressed. Following

is a perspective which addressed both curricular and ethical issues in civic education.

Ethics in the provision and practice of civic education

Ethics are moral rules and principles about what is right and what is wrong. For example, it is wrong to engage in indoctrination in the name of civic education; consequently, the content and methods of civic education ought to be morally unobjectionable. Determining what is morally unobjectionable is a task with which civic educators should collectively grapple.

The content of civic education

A core curriculum has been suggested in response to the need for a body of knowledge with theoretical and practical grounding. Without a knowledge base, civic education cannot be developed into a discipline with epistemological and philosophical justification.

Accountability in civic education

Accountability implies responsibility for one's actions, omission or commission. Ethics provide a sound basis for accountability which in turn promotes good governance, increases transparency, and maximizes learning outcomes. Programme accountability is as important as financial accountability.

Levels of accountability

Civic educators (providers and practitioners) are first and foremost accountable to the programme beneficiaries. The methods which are used in facilitating learning are a test of accountability. Methods in civic education should be pedagogically sound, psychologically empowering and respectful of the characteristics of the learners.

Accountability to the providers of civic education

Many civic educators will be working on behalf of civic education organizations which are the providers of resources for civic education and without which programmes will be difficult to implement. Providers include civic education professionals who are expected to set guidelines and standards for practice. They could be organized in a self-regulated body with a code of practice that is acceptable to all. Accountability in this context implies commitment to the norms and rules of conduct.

Guidelines for practice of civic education

The following guidelines emerged from the training workshops in Sierra Leone and from discourses on civic education in Kenya.

Non-partisanship and avoidance of propaganda

In the course of their work civic educators should not only be politically neutral, they must also be seen to be so. Being politically neutral does not mean being apolitical because civic education is in the domain of politics which provides its justification. Like political partisanship, ethnic, religious and other parochial considerations should be avoided.

Professionalism

A high level of professionalism is called for in the provision and practice of civic education. Professionalism implies possession of the requisite knowledge, skills, experience, independence and discernment in civic education matters.

Partnership and collaboration

The common goal of civic education providers is to have a citizenry that is sufficiently informed to participate in and sustain democratic processes. To this end, civic educators are expected to be supporters of each other, unhealthy rivalry and competition should be avoided. Pluralism in ideology and methodology should not detract from the collective strength of civic educators. Multi-level partnerships including partnerships with all political parties and the Government should be encouraged.

Peaceful resolution of contradictions

The dysfunctionality of conflict should be avoided and the creative use of conflict encouraged because conflict is inevitable in the dynamics of people's interaction. Consultative meetings to share lessons and experiences which are derived from practice and knowledge generation could be means not only of resolving conflict of a theoretical nature but also of enhancing the field of study and promoting dialogue.

Value for money

Civic education groups which source their funds externally should not only be accountable in terms of financial reporting to their benefactors, they should also provide good value for money in terms of qualitative delivery of services. The criteria for

determining quality in civic education is a task that should be collectively addressed. However, it should be noted that positive learner outcomes and the effectiveness of civic educational learning experiences are among the criteria for determining quality.

Commitment to democratic principles and practices
Civic education is about democracy. Consequently, the civic educator should be a committed democrat not only in matters of pedagogy but also in the conduct of the affairs of his or her organization; an undemocratic organization cannot deliver civic education in a democratic mode.

Start from where the people are
Civic education is a subset of education which is a fundamental right of people and a necessary condition for personal and social wellbeing. This right and prerequisite should be the starting point for the civic educator. Respect for the knowledge and culture of people is a prerequisite for creating a learning environment that is enabling and empowering.

Learning needs and learning tools
Civic education should address learning needs in the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes and values.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet learning needs without the tools of literacy, numeracy, oracy and the capacity to solve problems. These are essentially tools for survival, capacity development, participation in informed decision-making, and learning how to learn.

Values which civic educators should address
- Respect for people's cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage;
- Respect for and promotion of moral values;
- Promotion of social justice;
- Respect for diverse social, political and religious beliefs and systems;
- Respect for the civil rights of people;
- Respect for and protection of the environment;

- Promotion of peace and solidarity.

Access and equity in civic education

Civic education should be accessible to all. Barriers to access should be identified and systematically removed.

Means and ends of civic education

Active and participatory methods, approaches and techniques promote desirable learning outcomes in terms of the levels of knowledge and skills which should be attained. Participatory methods of assessing learning outcomes should be part of the processes of civic education.

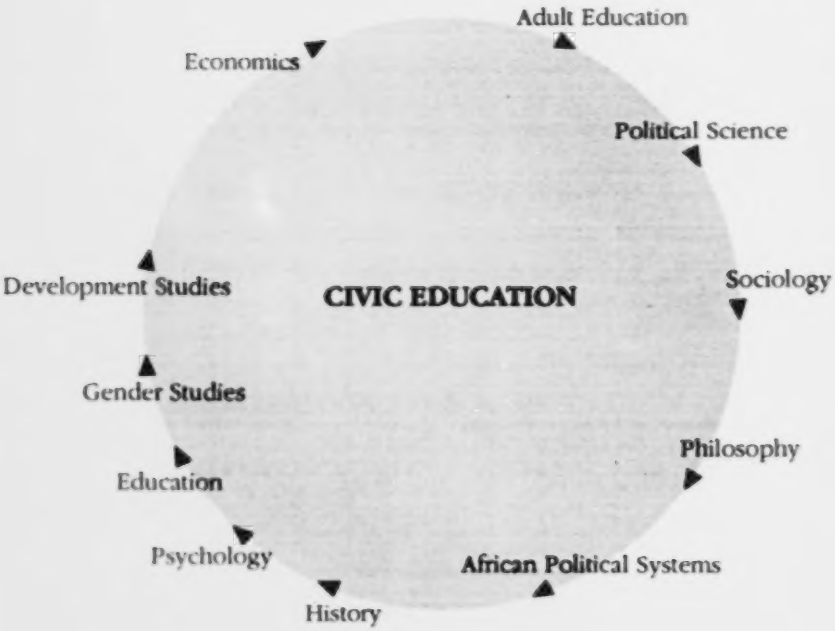
Organizing and planning civic education

The organization and planning of civic education should take into account the learning needs and resources of the target beneficiaries. Participatory needs assessment, for example, will give indications of what should be taught to meet identifiable learning needs, the learning resources that will be needed and how they can be mobilized, the language (s) to be used in the teaching-learning transaction, identification of constraints in the learning environment, methods of organizing and facilitating learning, including methods of monitoring and evaluation.

Inter-disciplinarity of civic education

Civic education draws its content from a number of disciplines and subjects as indicated in the following figure.

Figure 1: Dimensions of Civic Education



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Purpose Nature and Scope of Civic Education

SAMUEL K. TOROREI

Civil society is constituted by men, women, and groups getting together to do things by themselves in order to change the societies they live in. In the last two or so decades people of all classes and ethnic backgrounds have organized themselves to defend democracy and human rights, and to fight for more equitable development and a safer environment, or more simply, to help those in need or improve the quality of daily life in their neighbourhoods and communities.

What is distinctive about today is the extension of the virtues of solidarity and responsibility to the public spheres on a global scale. Today, massive, almost universal, movement towards greater citizens' participation and influence is a new phenomenon. It is not being promoted by one all-encompassing structure. It has no fixed address. It seeks neither converts nor political militants. Its target is not state power. At its centre is the figure of the citizen. And there are many citizens, with their myriad faces, concerns and sources of inspiration in today's world.

Citizen action is as multidimensional as the diversity of human endeavours. It may be local or global, small or massive, permanent or ephemeral, highly dramatic or almost invisible, confrontational or collaborative, spontaneous or organized, promoted by associations of like-minded individuals or by large civic movements or a combination of these, depending on the needs of the moment.

The sources of inspiration may be spiritual, religious, moral, social or political. The common thread, however, in this ever-changing quilt is to be found in the realm of values: solidarity and compassion for the fate and well-being of others, including unknown, distant others; a sense of personal responsibility and reliance toward altruistic giving and sharing; the refusal of inequality, violence and oppression.

These are the compelling moral values that generate people's social energy and enhance the texture of civil society. The themes and concerns vary from place to place and from time to time, but citizen movements are now a constant, global phenomenon.

Civic education, as we know it today, is an element of non-formal and adult education, and has always had a practical philosophy in the sense of having sources of motivation and commitment, criteria to choice of goals, and principles to guide action.

During the years following the Second World War, civic education, like adult education, has acquired ideology as well. The ideology of civic education should interface with the ideology of public education, and both ideologies should be nested in the higher order ideology of socio-economic development. Finally, the development ideology of a society must be subsumed under its political ideology.

In terms of political ideologies, developing countries present a curious picture. Capitalism was mixed with socialism. There is democratic socialism, African socialism and Islamic socialism, each of which differs in its ideological structure across countries. Sometimes socialism is mixed with militarism on the one hand and with Islamism on the other. Whatever the political ideologies or the development ideology, all seem to subscribe to the ideology of a modernizing nationalism.

African countries offer a vibrant picture of many ideological positions being put into practice. It is notable, of course that many of these practices are experimental and on a small scale. Much of civic education in countries is in the mode of ideology of modernization, rather than in the mode of the ideology of liberation or democratization.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Goal

The goal of civic education is an informed citizenry, actively and responsibly participating in the processes of good governance and attainment of sustainable development.

General Objective

The general objective of civic education is to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values for informed participation in the affairs of the society.

Objectives of Civic Education

Civic Education aims at community transformation. It helps to make people aware and capable of exercising their rights and duties effectively and responsibly, and making them conscious of their obligation to do so. It fosters the attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity in the exercise of human rights. It helps in developing the individual's

awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political action at all levels.

Article 26, paragraph 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". This statement underscores the importance of education in the exercise of human rights.

Specific Objectives

- The problems which impede good governance and sustainable development are identified.
- The nature and causes of the problems are analysed, and solutions for them suggested.
- Practices that impede good governance and sustainable development are discouraged and progressively discarded.
- Equal participation in societal processes for all, regardless of gender, ethnic, racial and religious considerations is promoted.
- Activities that lead to informed decisions and choices are listed.
- The fundamental and individual rights are identified.
- Means of demanding, promoting and protecting fundamental and individual rights are suggested.
- The global economic trends and their effects on the local economic situation are discussed.
- The causes of poverty are identified and ways of reducing them are suggested.
- The services of institutions that promote self-determination and positive group identity are identified and utilized.
- The need for cultural diversity is discussed and ways of promoting cultural interaction are suggested.
- The moral values and issues that enhance commitment for truth, human rights and justice are identified and discussed.

Target Groups

Civic education programmes target the following categories of beneficiaries:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Community based leaders	Women	Apolitical citizenry eg. unemployed youth, housewives
Community leaders	Youth	
Political Party Leaders	Voters	
Civic Leaders	Disabled	Members of marginalized social groups eg. prisoners, children in exceptional circumstances (orphans, street kids etc).
Legislators	Urban and rural poor	

Trends and Contemporary Issues in Civic Education

Trends

At the level of ideas, civic education will continue to be ideologized. This ideology will be a mixture of universalism, humanism and pragmatism. Civic educators will, therefore incorporate in their programmes such issues as peace, democracy, good governance, responsible citizenship, civic rights and obligations, disarmament, maintenance of equality between races and sexes and the protection of the weak and vulnerable. They will seek to teach adult men, women and youth such skills as income generation, family planning, conflict resolution, group dynamics, as well as the teaching of reading and writing.

Issues

Various issues will, however, have to be resolved. There are those who would like to keep civic education somehow free from politics. After all, it was the politicisation of UNESCO that led to the United States of America withdrawing from the organization. Others would like to keep civic education free from a particular type of politics - from fundamentalism of various sorts and origins. Education is inherently political, and so is civic education. This issue will be impossible to resolve - which means that it will remain with us for a long time to come.

5

The Development Context of Civic Education

EKUNDAYO J D THOMPSON & MARGARET MANLEY

"Only the educated are free" *Epicteus, 330 BC*

INTRODUCTION

For over thirty years since independence in most African countries, the term 'development' has been used and abused. It means different things to different people. In the majority of cases what has been done, and what is being done in the name of development is not what development really is.

For some people, development is said to take place when there is an increase in concrete and glass buildings, skyscrapers, roads, bridges, factories, dams, airports even when these have caused and continue to cause harm to the people. For others, development is the acquisition of material wealth; it is economic growth as an end in itself.

Economic growth which does not lead to improvement in the conditions of the people is not development. Development which is focused on investment in physical capital (buildings, factories, roads etc.) without investment in social capital (people's wellbeing) cannot be said to be development.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development is a process in which people strive to improve their standards of living through the use of their actual and potential capabilities. In the process of development there should be progress, growth and change from an undesirable situation to a desirable one.

Since independence in most African countries there has been RETROGRESSION in the political, social and economic spheres. In Sierra Leone, for example, there was clear evidence of retrogression due largely to political and economic mismanagement and

corruption. The majority of Sierra Leoneans are poorer now than they were at independence thirty six years ago.

Poverty is widespread in Africa and is accompanied by high unemployment, high illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation, social disintegration, dependency on outsiders, disrespect for people's rights, high levels of corruption, civil wars, and mass graves. Development is and should be about improving the lives of people, it is about meeting the basic needs of food, shelter, health care, education protecting the environment, and making people critically conscious of their conditions and empowered to bring about change.

Characteristics of Development

True development is people-centred, participatory, and sustainable.

What is people-centred development?

Development must be FOR the people; BY the people; OF the people.

Development FOR the People: The goals and objectives of development must be improvement in the lives of people.

Development BY the People: Development is a process in which people are involved using their knowledge, energies creativity, skills.

Development OF the people: Development must come from the people. People must have the desire for and commitment to development. Development cannot come from outside. It is not something which politicians can give to people. It should be endogenous.

What is Participatory Development?

People must participate, that is, be actively involved in the process of development and must have a share of the fruits of development (the results or products of the process of growth and change).

What is Participation?

Participation is a process by which the people, especially those who are disadvantaged (e.g. the poor, women), can influence decision-making at various levels of policy formulation, programme design, management, monitoring and evaluation.

What is Sustainable Development?

Development should not be temporary or short term, it must have lasting benefits which all the people enjoy.

Characteristics of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is:

- self-reliant
- endogenous
- environment friendly
- participatory
- integrated
- comprehensive
- balanced *(maintains balance between people and nature)*
- empowering
- cost-effective
- people-centred
- equitable
- holistic
- context-specific
- culture-specific

Political Development

If development is the process of progression, have Sierra Leoneans made progress in the political field?

Between 1961 (independence) and 1992 (overthrow of the APC Government) military coups, political thuggery, civil war, dictatorship, acts of corruption by politicians, violation of peoples' rights and freedoms have characterized the political history of Sierra Leone. Politically, there was no progress made because the conditions for political development did not exist.

Conditions for Political Development

- Respect for the rights and freedoms of the people
- Good Governance
- Participation by the people in electing those by whom they should be governed in free and fair elections
- Awareness and understanding of political, social and economic issues
- Freedom of the Press

- Impartial and honest judicial and legal system
- Incorruptible judges and magistrates
- Literacy

There was progress in 1996 when Sierra Leoneans took action to end military rule by electing a civilian government but the action by soldiers in May 1997 to overthrow the elected government turned the clock of progress backwards.

Economic Development

For a long time, development was seen in terms of the growth rate of the national income. Factors such as income distribution, employment, health, housing and education were never taken into account. It was believed that the increase in national income would 'trickle down'. This did not happen and Sierra Leoneans remained economically underdeveloped for over three decades.

Economic Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has not developed economically. The backbone of the economy, agriculture, in which 65% of the labour force are employed contributes between 30% and 35% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There are several reasons for this, namely, subsistence farming, rural-urban migration, inefficient methods of agriculture, the nature of the land tenure system.

Other reasons for the underdevelopment of Sierra Leone's economy include;

- the oil crisis in 1973;
- inefficient and unprogressive economic and fiscal policies and practices;
- widespread official corruption and indiscipline;
- political mismanagement;
- dilapidated infrastructure - roads, electricity, communication; among others.

Instead of economic development Sierra Leone has witnessed very serious economic crises brought about mainly by reckless political behaviour. In 1990 Sierra Leone was named the poorest country in the world according to the United Nations Development Report. The 1997 Report presents a lifeless situation too.

The following selected economic and social indicators would show the human (under) development situation in Sierra Leone in 1992.

The Human (under) Development Situation in Sierra Leone
(Selected indicators as at 1992 except indicated otherwise)

Population	4.4 million
Life expectancy at birth	42 years
Rate of Adult illiteracy (15+)	76%
Female illiteracy (15+)	88%
Male illiteracy (15+)	65%
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita	$1020
Gross National Product (GNP) per capita (8)	$200 (1991)
People in absolute poverty	2 million
People without access to health services	2.8 million
People without access to safe water	2.2 million
People without access to sanitation	1.6 million
Infant mortality	144 per 1000 live births
Maternal mortality	1000 per 10,000 live births (1988)
Population per doctor	14,290 (1990)
Labour force as % of total population	35%
Public expenditure on education (1990) as % of GNP	1.4
Public expenditure on health (1990) as % of GNP	1.7
Military expenditure as % of combined education and health expenditure (1991)	23

Source: UNDP Development Report

The present thrust of economic development is 'free market' - freedom to buy and sell without restrictions, barriers, rules, regulations. In a free market situation the strong survive and the weaker ones are trampled under foot. Free market economic development in practice is socially and economically unjust. Economic development should be characterized by social justice. There should be a balance between economic expediency and social considerations.

Cultural Development

The importance of culture in development is increasingly being recognized given the fact that development takes place in a cultural context. Culture according to Amadu-Mahtar M'Bow former Director General of UNESCO is

> *the end product of all that society has created in the course of time and as the essential driving force of all that it continues to create, both materially and in the intellectual sphere - something which shapes the awareness and the collective imagination of its members, determining the way they are and the way they see the world. Thus culture constitutes the very heart of the people.*

Culture is defined as the sum total of the way of life of a society or social group. It is characterized by distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features. Ideas, beliefs, knowledge and values are transmitted and inherited. These constitute the basis for social action. Development is culture specific: it should be rooted in the culture of the people, is endogenous and internally generated.

Strategies for development should take account of cultural diversities, traditional knowledge and practices. The use of the languages of the people, for example, will not only enhance their participation it will accelerate the pace of development by the removal of language barriers.

If development is for the people, by the people, and of the people, it follows, therefore, that the people must define development. The uncritical acceptance of external cultural values is not only anti development but culturally suicidal. Preservation, transmission and utilization of culture for development should be an objective of development. Development must be culture sensitive because peoples' behaviours are influenced by and conditioned by traditional values and customs.

Professor Ali Mazrui in *Cultural Forces in World Politics* suggests the following seven functions of culture:

- defining and regulating the system of production and consumption.
- determining what we see and understand. (Culture provides our lenses of perception and cognition.)
- providing motives for human behaviour
- providing a basis of identity. (Culture makes us what we are.)

- Culture is a mode of communication
- Stratifying society (society is culturally organised).
- providing criteria for evaluation.

Social Development

Social development is an educational process in which education is used to enable people improve their conditions. In order to improve their conditions people need to be aware of the obstacles to their development such as lack of education.

Provision of social services is part of social development; services such as primary health care, sanitation, education, rural water supply, rural electrification, building of feeder roads. These services are often provided through social development or rural/community development projects. Development projects do not constitute development, they initiate a process of structured social mobilization with the objective of increasing the participation of the people, building their capacities, unleashing their potentialities for self-reliance.

The consciousness raising approach which Paulo Freire (see *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) used can be described as a social development method for a social development objective or goal. Social development is akin to community development.

Community Development

Community development is a process of improving the wellbeing of a community. It is characterized by collective community problem or need identification, analysis, and action to solve the problem and meet the need using resources which are available in the community. Community solidarity, rooted in a shared vision of survival, is the foundation of community development.

The Instrument of Community Development

The instrument of community development is community education. Community education emphasizes cooperation and a sense of community spirit. It emphasizes communalism and is against individualism.

Community development projects are examples of community development in most rural and urban communities e.g. communities which are poor, marginalized, exploited economically and politically over the years. It is the heart of the matter of development.

Characteristics of Community Development

Community Development is local resource based, integrated, participatory, sustainable, cultural, social, self-reliant, action oriented, voluntary.

Community development is integrated, and should seek to address the diverse needs of the community in the areas of food security, primary health care, education, cultural development, provision of safe water.

Signs and symbols of integrated community development (ICD) projects or integrated rural development (IRD) projects adorn the roads and paths of many communities in Africa. But do these signs and symbols represent the reality of community development? Are the people at the centre of development action or is someone trying to 'develop' them? What should the people be doing to develop themselves?

National Development

National development is national confidence in what the people of a nation are, and in what they have. National development could also be explained in terms of "nation building". It is often said that African countries are not nations because of the diversities in language, and culture in general. These diversities should not be viewed as weaknesses; they are actually the strengths of a nation. The United States of America, for example, can be described as a beautiful patchwork of different peoples and cultures. In diversity unity can be constructed.

To build a stable nation, the following are essential:

- Nationalism: love of country
- Good leadership
- Love of freedom and liberty
- Ethnic tolerance
- Abhorrence of injustice
- Peaceful co-existence
- Honesty
- Justice
- Empathy
- Respect for others
- Belief in pluralism
- Democracy
- Ethic of work and self-reliance

These are some of the values and virtues of nation building - they constitute the foundation of a strong, vibrant and sustainable nation. Several nations have recently collapsed in Africa because they were 'built on sand;' tribalism, dishonesty, bad leadership, corruption, disrespect for the rights of others, and lies. Every citizen has a

duty and a responsibility to nation building.

No matter how well prepared a national development plan is, no matter how much material and financial resources the leaders are able to mobilize for national development, if the people are not at the centre of that development plan it will definitely not be sustainable.

Questions to ponder on:
What is our national development vision?
What kind of society do we want in the next 50 years?
How can we achieve that society?
Where are we now?

Social Justice

National Development should be based on social justice, that is, fairness to all. Fairness to all in the allocation of resources - jobs, development projects, opportunities for participation in building the nation; fairness in administration of the law according to the rule of law. Justice should be practised in every aspect of our lives - in the home, in the school, in the church or the mosque, at the workplace, on the playing field, in the public transport, in the shops, at the market places, on the street. Justice makes all of us equal and guarantees us our basic rights and freedoms including the right to live.

There are institutions and mechanisms to ensure social justice. These include the judicial and legal system, the constitution of a country, the system of education which should, as part of its functions, transmit values of justice and fairplay.

The home is also an instrumental forum in promoting social justice. In the home is the family which is the basic unit of society. Justice or injustice begins in the home and in the family. The role of women in promoting social justice should, therefore, not be underestimated.

Injustice in Sierra Leone

What has happened in Sierra Leone since the coup d'etat of 1992 is a culmination of years of injustice manifested in acts of official corruption ranging from election rigging, political thuggery, theft of state property, erosion of the values of honesty, hardwork and fairplay to lack of concern for others, perversion of justice by the courts to 'sell game' on the football pitch. The evidence is abundant. The coup d'etat of 1967 set the stage for the coup in 1992 which set in motion a chain of events leading to the coup of May 1997.

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6

Civil Society and the Citizen

AKIE WILSON & JOE SAM-KING

CIVIC EDUCATION FOR GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Civic Education facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and engenders positive attitudes, values and behaviour patterns for responsible citizenship. A responsible citizen exhibits the following characteristics: a positive self-image, stands for the truth, is committed to honesty and integrity, is helpful to others and demonstrates respect for the dignity and worth of every human being regardless of his or her race, colour, religion, ethnic group, economic and social status, respect for the opinions, beliefs, culture and aspirations of different groups of peoples as a way of life. A responsible citizen demonstrates positive attitudes and values towards himself or herself, towards others, towards the social group to which he/she belongs.

A GOOD CITIZEN IN THE COMMUNITY

A good citizen is one who is always willing to help and work with others. Good citizens endeavour to contribute to and sustain community development. Community development is an important aspect of the economic and social advancement of all in the community. Women being important players in community development should not be marginalized. They should be involved with their male counterparts in collective community action. Community action can be in the form of road construction, school infrastructural development and provision of water supply. Community solidarity is a unifying factor in overall development.

A good citizen has the responsibility to honour all financial obligations. He or she should be aware of the importance of regular payment of taxes, bills and other financial commitments for the provision of amenities and social services. It is important to pay all bills regularly and honestly for the improvement of the community.

Patriotism/Nationalism

Patriotism/nationalism is consciously promoted in civic education. Patriotism encompasses the concept of one country and devotion to serve, develop, and defend one's country. Between 1896 when the British Government declared a protectorate over the hinterland of Sierra Leone and 1961 when the country attained independence, individuals owed allegiance to their tribes or ethnic groups rather than to their country, but there was a change of allegiance after the attainment of independence in 1961. Since independence the concept of patriotism has been gradually developed. Patriotism means that the interest of the country must supersede all ethnic or language group considerations.

The following statement encapsulates the concept of patriotism: "it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country". Love for one's country is patriotism. A man or woman who loves his or her country and is ready to make personal sacrifices for the development of that country is a patriot.

Symbols of Nationalism and Patriotism

Symbols such as the national anthem and pledge remind us of our duty to our country. They are meant to galvanize the citizens into action. They call for unity in diversity.

The coat of Arms and the national flag are familiar symbols of nationhood. They symbolise one nation, one country, and one people.

The national anthem and the recently launched national pledge are meant to be motivating forces to arouse national consciousness and national or civic allegiance.

Civil Society

The Sierra Leone society is composed of various groups of people, such as language or ethnic or tribal groups, religious groups, social and cultural groups, economic groups, kinship or family groups. These groups are organized in social institutions which constitute civil society. They meet, plan and work in furtherance of their interests and in accordance with their aims and objectives. A society which consists of various groups of people working harmoniously for the welfare of society, community and the nation are part of civil society. Peace, harmony, patriotism, tolerance are virtues that characterize civil society.

Social institutions are usually powerful cohesive forces. Each of the various language or ethnic groups in Sierra Leone consists of a group of people who come from the same place, speak the same language, share the same land area, and make their living

together. The major language groups in Sierra Leone are:

Temne	Mende	Limba	Loko
Kono	Yalunka	Madingo	Fula
Sherbro	Susu	Koranko	Vai

These tribal or ethnic groups possess peculiar language, social and cultural characteristics. They form the population of the country and contribute to its overall development.

Problems of Civil Society

In Sierra Leone, tribalism is evident. The effects of tribalism are devastating and should not be encouraged. Tribalism results in a situation where people use tribal allegiance to further parochial interests; national interests take second place after tribal interests. Where preferential treatment is given to someone because he or she belongs to a certain tribe or ethnic group, for example, admission to a particular school or job placement, tribalism is being promoted. Opportunities should be distributed on the basis of merit or on appropriate or prerequisite qualifications or criteria. Where there are policies in favour of positive discrimination or affirmative action or quota these policies should be public knowledge and administered in accordance with laid down rules and procedures to prevent abuse.

Cohesive Forces in Civil Society

In African countries, religion is one of the cohesive forces. The different religions in Sierra Leone are Christianity, Islam (Mohamedanism), Buddhism, Bahai faith, Judaism, and Krishna.

Religion is very important in a society. People who belong to the same religious group seem to have unity and solidarity and tend to share the same values (beliefs) in society. Religion brings the various parts of society together. Religious and other opinion leaders are often solicited to counsel or motivate their members towards full participation in community action programmes. Sierra Leone has witnessed a period of partisan politics, ethnic tension and conflicts that threaten political order; political conflicts involving violent attacks on people and destruction of property have characterized political competition. Inter-ethnic competition and hostility have manifested themselves in struggles for opportunities in the civil service and institutions of learning. These were antecedents to the disintegration of the state and the outbreak of the rebel war and the

coup d'etat of May 1997.

Strategies for Strengthening Civil Society

Organizations, associations, trade unions, local non-governmental organizations, social clubs and cooperatives should be formed to undertake development initiatives geared to improving the living standards of the people.

Role of Civil Society Organization

Civil society organizations should play the following roles:

- Facilitate development of solidarity, mutual assistance, and promote peace while serving the society in order to meet their basic needs;
- Mobilize civil society members, men, women and children, the aged and handicapped to solve social problems;
- Raise the consciousness of the people and put pressure on government to respond to their needs and demands;
- Demand a more accountable and responsible government;
- Advocate for policies (economic and social) which put the people first;
- Empower people through education and sensitization;
- Mobilize civil society against oppressive regimes;
- Break down inter-ethnic barriers;
- Contribute to solving financial problems and meet needs through revolving credit/saving schemes as mechanisms for providing capital/resource base and support for people's small enterprise and for meeting their investment needs.
- Provide religious training and social education centres;
- Influence change in government policies and promote bottom-up development strategies for the resolution of intractable social problems such as poor housing, poor education facilities, health and public transport facilities. The activities which preceded the 1996 general elections and the handover of power to an elected civilian government and the response to the May 25 coup demonstrated the power of civil society in Sierra Leone.

Civic Tolerance

Civic tolerance ensures public safety, national security, democratic action in social, political, economic and other spheres. Knowledge and practice of civic tolerance leads to harmonious development of society. The conceptual and operational meaning of civic tolerance includes: accepting and respecting the rights, privileges, views, opinions of the citizens in the exercise of their functions.

Different professions are concerned with promoting civic tolerance: for example the legal profession, the teaching profession, members of trade unions and the security forces.

The roles which these agents play include:

- acceptance of and respect for everyone irrespective of race, colour, language, sex, religion, or political opinions;
- ensuring and maintaining every member's right to privacy and to live in peace, develop and participate in social and economic progress;
- promoting and maintaining confidentiality (where necessary) in relations between authorities and citizens;
- accepting and respecting the rights of citizens to self-determination and to freely dispose of their wealth and resources;
- accepting and respecting the rights and freedom of citizens to contest elections and expression of contrary opinions without discrimination or persecution;
- safeguarding the right to freedom of speech, secrecy of the ballot, freedom from arbitrary arrest and free access to the media;
- safeguarding the rights of citizens to freedom of assembly and association, to life, freedom of thought, and of conscience;
- helping to observe the principle of innocence of the suspect and defendant until his/her guilt is proved;
- respecting constitutional guarantees such as independence of the judiciary;
- providing education and training to awaken awareness and promoting the rights of groups, particularly those which are vulnerable.

The Sierra Leone Parliamentary and Presidential Elections of February and March 1996:

A Case Study in Civic Tolerance

To ensure that the electorate was well informed, knowledgeable and able to participate, the military government of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) set up an independent electoral body called the Interim National Election Commission (INEC) early in 1995. INEC, a neutral and impartial commission, not associated with any political party or group, promoted a climate of civic tolerance for the elections to be conducted without fear or coercion.

Some of the measures taken by INEC to ensure free and fair elections included:

- educating the electorate nationwide through the mass media, posters, radio programmes in Sierra Leonean languages and other means, on the meaning of the elections;
- ensuring that the eligible voters had opportunity to register, to vote and to have information on the election procedure;
- access to polling stations and ensuring that each vote cast was secure;
- ensuring that all political parties obeyed the code of conduct and inviting international and local observers to monitor the whole electoral process.

Based on the 1991 democratic constitution of Sierra Leone, a new government was elected. The government consists of the President who is the head of State, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians. The Government represents the will of the people of Sierra Leone expressed through free and fair elections.

Civic tolerance is also expressed in the choice of the cabinet. One of the functions of the President is to choose the cabinet which consists of men and women who are not parliamentarians, but if one is a parliamentarian and is chosen as a cabinet minister, he or she is required by law to resign his/her seat in parliament. Cabinet ministers-designate who are approved by the parliament are charged with the management of the affairs of government or ministries.

Allocation of Seats in Parliament

The Proportional Representation (PR) System was used in allocating parliamentary seats to political parties. The allocation of seats was made according to the number of votes a political party garnered in the election.

Each political party produced a list of candidates and electors were asked to cast their

votes for a party list. Any political party which received at least 5% of the total votes cast was entitled to a number of seats in parliament. The higher the percentage of total votes a party received, the more the parliamentary seats that party was allocated. Thus from the election results, the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party with 36% of the votes got most of the seats. A few other parties like the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Peoples' Party (NPP) coalesced with the SLPP to form a government.

For the presidential candidate, a run-off election took place on March 15 1996 following the general parliamentary election. It was in the run-off that, Ahmad Tajan Kabba got 59.49% of the total votes. A presidential candidate needed at least 55% of the total votes cast to be declared winner. In the run-off election Dr. John Karefa Smart got 40.51% of the total votes. Civic tolerance is demonstrated when people are free to express their wishes and intentions in elections, social, economic, cultural and religious associations in order to safeguard and promote their interests and those of their country.

7

Gender, Political Literacy and Civic Education

AGNES PESSIMA

WHAT IS GENDER?

Sex and gender are two kinds of differences which exist between men and women. Many people erroneously equate gender with sex. As soon as the term gender is used what comes to people's minds is women. Others perceive gender to mean male and female. It is, therefore, important to make a distinction between 'gender' and sex before an analysis of gender in the context of political literacy and civic education.

Sex is the biological difference between men and women. It is the physiological, functional and psychological differences that distinguish the male from female (cf. Feminist Dictionary).

But gender refers to the social relationship between men and women. It does not refer to men or women as separate categories but to the relationship between them. It is not a physical difference. It refers to people's expectations of someone because the person is male or female. Gender relations vary from country to country. For example, gender relations in Sierra Leone may differ from those in Ghana, just as gender relations in Britain may differ from those in the United States of America. Along the continuum of differences gender relations in the "First World" differ from those in the so-called "Third World". There is also a gender difference between men and women, that is, women as a group have a lower status than men (Mackenzie, 1993). It can be stated therefore, that sex is biologically determined while gender is socially determined.

This chapter focuses on gender issues in the context of political literacy and civic education; consequently, the contributions which women have made in the political domain in other parts of the world would serve as examples to raise awareness among the women who will be the beneficiaries of this project. The contributions of men to world politics has been over-emphasized to the extent of obscuring the contribution of women. History books are replete with the political achievements of men. This is partly because men's activities in politics are taken for granted while women's contribution to

the same are either undervalued or neglected. Thanks to women's movements and feminist considerations, herstory is now being re-written to take account of the important roles women have played in the political arena, the so-called man's world.

Women in Politics: Some Examples

Although women's contribution to the development of societies in general has been obscured, history has recorded the important role of some women like Queen Ranavalon III of Madagascar (1883 -1877) who successfully stood up in the midst of foreign threats and domestic tensions; Empress Taitu (1883-1910) of Ethiopia who made major contributions to the domestic and foreign policies of Ethiopia (cf. Synders and Tadesse 1995). From the First World a number of female activists have made history. However, reference will be made to two viz, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney (1905) and their struggle for women's enfranchisement in Britain. More recent cases are those of Indira Ghandi of India and Margaret Thatcher of Britain. These examples provide evidence of the roles of women and their feats in stepping out of patriarchal enclaves to make a mark in world history. They should serve to motivate women, not only in this project but also in the whole of Africa on the need to do what others have done in the past. This would make them realize that the domain of politics is not the preserve of men. Women have critical roles to play in ensuring that there is good governance. The history of Sierra Leone, for example, cannot be complete without Madam Yoko. As Chief of Senehun she was known for her diplomacy and successes in war. During the last two decades Sierra Leonean women's interests in politics have increased exponentially. This is not surprising because women have always been natural leaders in their communities. Some of them have been leaders either because they come from "ruling families" or because they hold key positions in the Bundo society (female secret society).

Some Sierra Leonean women have found their way into politics through the institution of chieftaincy as group leaders and title holders in traditional societies. Women from the Southern and the Eastern Provinces have had a long tradition of active participation in national politics, though at a minimal, albeit significant, level.

In 1930 women in Freetown were granted the franchise. Consequently, they became eligible to be voted for in local and national politics. However, women's interest in politics was triggered by the formation of the African Youth League, the first political party to incorporate women in the party hierarchy. Consequently, a few women became very active in politics. In 1938 Constance Cummings-John won the municipal elections and became a councillor in the municipality of Freetown. She later became an executive

member of the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). After World War II more women showed an interest in national politics and in the trade union movement, for example, the Sierra Leone Washer Women's Union, and the Sierra Leone Market Women's Union. The aim of these unions was to create awareness among Sierra Leonean women. After the formation of the Sierra Leone Women's Movement headed by Cummings-John, it fought for feminine rights and increased opportunities for women. It was around these objectives that the women in the western area were united. Sir Albert Margai, the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, created political positions for women. He appointed women leaders known as Mammy Queens with specific political functions. Over the decades more and more women became interested in national politics and names like Mary Martyn and Nancy Steel came to the fore.

A more recent example of Sierra Leone women's participation in national politics was their participation in the Consultative Conference on Peace before elections held at he Bintumani Hotel in February 1996. Several women's groups were represented at this meeting where they eloquently articulated their position by demanding that elections be held immediately. They protested strongly against any postponement of the elections.

Since Sierra Leone is a patriarchal society, gender and power relations are inculcated into either sexes at an early age so that by the time children reach adulthood male supremacy and female subservience is well ingrained. This is the case even among educated women. The situation is even worse with poor and illiterate women.

Gender and Political Literacy

Women and men hold different positions within the household and in society: men are regarded as the bread-winners and women as housekeepers. Therefore, when men and women work side by side, men assume automatic leadership while women follow. Men's right to political literacy is taken as normal and acceptable but women's access to it is questioned. This implies that political literacy for women is a strategic gender need - that is, it will enable women to aspire to the level where the men already are. It therefore becomes strategic as a political issue.

Legal Literacy for Women's Empowerment

It is generally accepted that women are oppressed, marginalized and dependent. John Stewart Mill observed nearly 200 years ago that the law contributes to perpetuating women's subordination.

The Law and How it Influences Women's Subordination

The laws of any land affect directly the social and the economic status of men and women. But in the majority of cases the law upholds and legitimizes women's subordination. Women in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe have all experienced incidences of oppression. They are marginalized and are made to be dependent in the political, legal, economic and social spheres. Women's participation in politics in Sierra Leone and in other parts of the world is low. The law has been an instrument of perpetuating women's subordinate role, for example, the customary laws of India and Africa. Sometimes when in theory gender balance is achieved in practice the situation remains unchanged. This may, in part, be due to lack of understanding of women's rights and absence of mechanisms to enforce them and seek redress in cases of violation.

The idea of "public" versus "private" as expressed in the law evidences society's perception of women's right; public which includes work and politics is accepted as the domain of the men while private which includes domestic life, home, family constitute the domain of women. In Asia and Africa, this division is seen in the many state laws that govern the public, and customary laws that cover family matters.

While the degree of women's subordination may differ from country to country there exists certain commonalities, for example, women's right in the family to make decisions, control resources, inherit property, contract marriage and divorce, are limited in many countries.

Another major problem with the law is that the majority of women are outside of it. This is due to the fact that most women do not know what the law offers them because it does not offer them much. Quite often in Sierra Leone, family matters are seen by the police as matters to be settled at home. Battered and shattered wives have no recourse to the law and sometimes the law is expensive and incomprehensible. What is more, the law does not work to the advantage of the women who, through experience, have found out that informal remedies work better for them for example, taking complaints to an influential member of the extended family. Scholar and Kadingamer-Rajasingham (1992) are of the opinion that the law is an unfinished project and since it is the product of historical social processes, it can be changed to create new norms to reflect new values. Where the content of the law is seen as discriminatory or unjust this can be changed or abolished and new ones created. Where the problem is structural, for example, the courts, the law enforcement and administrative agencies of the state - a strategy must be worked out to challenge and change these institutions. To effect positive change, women's political capacities must be developed. They must be able to discern the

cultural values and social norms embodied in the law; this can be done through legal literacy. Legal literacy for women does not merely mean political participation with voting rights and citizenship, it also means that unjust power relations must be transformed, with women at the centre of this transformation.

Legal literacy for women should be included in the civic education curriculum as a step to empowering women. When awareness is created among women only then can women mobilize to effect changes in the laws that affect them negatively. Women can form a powerful pressure group and work towards law reform.

Marriage and Inheritance

Engagement

When an engagement between a man and woman to marry is broken, the offended party can take the other to court but only if the reason for breaking the engagement is justifiable before the law. For example, a man asks a woman to have a child as a condition for marriage; the woman gets pregnant and has a child. The man engages the woman but later abandons her and marries another woman. If she takes him to court for breach of contract she cannot be compensated because the law is against having children before marriage.

Most women are ignorant of the law. It has become fashionable for men to ask women to have children for them before they can marry them. Since most women are ignorant of the law they succumb only to realize too late that ignorance of the law is not a valid plea.

Customary Marriage

Customary marriage was not recognized in law before 1965. Consequently, many Christians who had married under customary law took other women to church to marry under the Christian Marriage Act. Although this was amended later in 1965 when the practice became popular it can be seen that this law favoured men. Todate, some educated men are still marrying under customary law. Women need to know the disadvantages of this type of marriage. Legal literacy can be a useful tool in their education.

Divorce

The majority of Sierra Leone women are not aware of the fact that divorce can be granted

on the grounds of cruelty and desertion which is commonplace in most marital homes. Customary law on divorce is inequitable. A woman can be divorced if she is lazy or disobedient to her husband or engages in gossip. These grounds for divorce are laughable to say the least, but they can only be changed when women become aware of their political and civil rights.

Inheritance

Muslim men were given the power to make a will in 1988. Women too can make a will if they are aware of the provision in the law. If a Muslim woman makes a will, half of her property should go to her husband. If she dies intestate all her property automatically go to her husband. The inequity here is glaring; while muslim men can distribute all of their property in a way that is pleasing to them, women cannot. Under customary law women do not have power to make a will.

Maintenance

In the event of divorce and the woman taking custody of the children, the man is required to maintain the children with the sum of Le8,00 per child per week. This law remains unchanged in Sierra Leone in 1996. With the current poor state of the economy, this amount cannot even buy a loaf of bread.

Under Muslim Law the man is not bound to maintain his children. The Quran states that the father should use his conscience to decide how much he will give to the mother of his children.

Most of the laws governing marriage and inheritance are anachronistic and need to be revised but this can only be effectively done when the number of women in decision making positions, and in politics increases. The Political Literacy and Civic Education Project should start legal awareness programmes for women. Issues like engagement, types of marriage, divorce, custody of children, rights of the women in the home, competence and compellability of spouses, inheritance and maintenance should be included in the curriculum.

Certain gender stereotypes would have to be unlearned if the project should benefit men and women equally, for example, men as the breadwinners and women as dependants. In many low income families in Sierra Leone the women are the bread winners. Institutions and social structures that perpetuate unequal gender power relations should be reformed. Women who have been socialized to behave in expected ways should be enlightened and be able to get out of their inertia and see themselves as

equal partners with men in the political arena. Positive changes in the lives of the women at the end of the project will be indicators that learning has taken place. According to Rogers (1994) "Learning means making changes in our knowledge, thinking, feeling and doing".

Learning ought to be planned to meet the challenges of democratization and pluralism. Changes must be evident in the lives of the beneficiaries especially the women. A civic culture ought to be imbibed.

Civic Culture

Civic culture is also known as participating culture. People are expected to have knowledge and information about the government and its activities. They should be able to express their views (without fear) about the government and its policies. They should feel confident to participate in politics and be guided by reason rather than emotion. They should feel free to belong to groups of their choice. Men and women who are participating in the PLACE Project should be role models in fostering a civic culture.

Civic Education and Gender

The 1991 Constitution, at a glance, states that, "supreme power belongs to the people of Sierra Leone from whom government through the constitution derives all its powers, authority and legitimacy" and "the participation of the people in government shall be guaranteed in accordance with provisions of the constitution".

When reference is made to the people of a country it is the men and women of that country who are being referred to in theory. But in practice much emphasis is on the men because women are generally considered as second class citizens and have been socialized into seeing themselves as such. In the past women had to be very educated to be seen to be equal with men. Because the majority of women in Sierra Leone are illiterate, civic education, especially at grassroots level, should enable them to acknowledge the fact that the fundamental principles of state have meaning for them.

Duties of the Citizen

The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone States That:

- Every citizen should cultivate a sense of nationalism and patriotism so that loyalty to the country (state) shall take precedence over all other loyalties.
- Every citizen shall respect the dignity, religion, rights and interest of others.

- Every citizen shall protect and preserve public property because it belongs to the citizens.
- Every citizen shall ensure the proper control and upbringing of his/her children and ward.
- Every citizen shall participate in and defend all democratic processes and practices.
- Every citizen shall render assistance to appropriate lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.

Even though it is generally assumed that men are aware of the laws of the land and know their rights, not all men are aware of their duties as citizens. The project should ensure that both men and women know their rights. In addition, women should understand that all the duties referred to in the constitution apply equally to them as they do to men. Women should not limit their duties to just raising children.

Women's Human Rights

In Sierra Leone, "The recognition and protection of fundamental human rights and freedom of the individual is enshrined in the Constitution" (1991 Constitution). Practice is however at variance with theory. There is a general lack of knowledge and understanding about laws that affect women. Elsewhere steps are being taken to include a gender perspective in the law. In the University of Zimbabwe, there is now a women's law course at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels; in India, in the National School of Law at Bangalore one of the priorities is to develop gender perspectives on law. Sierra Leone should emulate such examples so that the Law School can produce a new breed of legal practitioners with adequate awareness of the law in the context of gender. At the United Nations Conference in Vienna, 14 - 28 June 1993, a declaration was made on Women's Human Rights as follows:

> *The Human Rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal Human Rights. The full and equal participation of women in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at national, regional and international levels and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international committee.*

Though Ashworth (1993) described it as a tense and difficult conference, it however

ended on a positive note putting all aspects of women's human rights and their violations on the agenda of the United Nations Human Rights system. The gender balanced Political Literacy and Civic Education (PLACE) project at Kroo Bay is therefore in line with current thoughts on upgrading the status of women and balancing the gender power relations.

8

The Constitution of Sierra Leone

SOLOMON E. BEREWA

Sierra Leone is a common law country. What this means is that in addition to the laws enacted by parliament including the Decrees of the National Provisional Ruling Council, a large part of the Laws of Sierra Leone comprises of pronouncements made by Judges in cases decided by them. This body of laws is normally referred to as "judge made" law or common law. This is one similarity between the legal system of Sierra Leone and the English Legal System.

However, Judges in Sierra Leone, as in England, would never admit that they make laws. For them to admit this fact would run counter to the well-established constitutional law doctrine of the separation of powers. This doctrine briefly states that the three arms of Government - the Executive, the Legislature and Judiciary have distinct functions. The Legislature makes laws which are carried out by the Executive and interpreted by the Judiciary. In order to maintain a proper balance in the governance of the State there should not be any usurpation by any of the these three organs of the functions of the other. In theory, therefore, the Judges should not be making laws, but only interpreting the laws made by Parliament.

In examining the corpus of the laws of Sierra Leone, we shall find out that the constitutional doctrine of the separation of powers is deviated from in several instances for the purpose of maintaining peace and harmony in the state and for doing justice among individual citizens. This is how the bulk of our criminal law such as murder, conspiracy and the law of tort and contract came into existence.

The only caveat is that, where there is clear enactment by Parliament covering a particular situation the Judges can only interpret that enactment applying established rules of statutory construction or interpretation; they cannot make a judicial pronouncement which will go counter to that enactment.

The Laws of Sierra Leone

The laws of Sierra Leone have been succinctly defined in section 170 (1) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 and section 74 of the Courts Act to include: The Constitution of Sierra Leone, Laws made by Parliament, The existing law and The common law.

The term "laws made by Parliament" does not require any discussion since an explanation of what the expression "common law" means has been given.

The term "existing law" encompasses laws in force before the commencement of the Constitution of 1991 and it includes both the written law enacted by Parliament and all orders and instruments made under such laws. It also includes the common law in force at the date of the constitution.

The purpose of making provision for the existing law in the definition of the laws of Sierra Leone is to recognize the fact that a new constitution does not necessarily give birth to a new nation and a new system of laws. It takes cognisance of the prior existence of the nation and of a valid system of laws which are to continue even after the promulgation of the new constitution. This is the reason for including in all our constitution, since independence, a provision for "the existing laws" in the definition of the laws of Sierra Leone.

The National Constitution and its Intended Objectives

A National (written) Constitution defines the state and its delineation; defines the principal organs of government - the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary; clearly defines the roles and specific areas of operation of these organs; provides adequate checks and balances so that no one organ can over-step its area of jurisdiction and usurp the functions of the other; states the rights and duties of the citizens in the state and spells out in detail how the rights are to be protected and how the duties are to be enforced; and lays down rules and policies for the good governance of the state and for the good of all.

The National Constitution is the supreme law of the land against which the validity of any other law or the conduct of action of any organ of government or individual is tested.

The state is defined as a geographical entity with a definite location and well-defined boundaries, and as a judicial person with rights and duties. In a democratic constitution such as the 1991 Constitution the source of power of the organs of government is said to be the people. It is their collective will as contained in the Constitution drafted by them and which confers legitimacy on the government. The government is said to be a trustee

only for the people, acting for and on their behalf and for their good. Once the government fails to act in this way it loses its essence and legitimacy and should be removed.

For this reason the 1991 Constitution, like most democratic constitutions, makes provisions for free and fair elections at regular intervals in order to give the citizenry an opportunity to pass judgement on the stewardship of their government. A one-party Constitution as we had in 1978 is therefore a direct contradiction of this democratic principle. An independent judiciary is a *sine qua non* for a democratic society. It prevents totalitarianism and secures the protection of the rights of citizens against oppressive governments. By the proper administration of the law, especially the criminal law, it ensures that law and order prevails in the state for the good of all. Hence, in the 1991 Constitution there is an elaborate provision for the appointment of competent Judges, the tenure of whose office is adequately secured. It is a fundamental constitutional principle that the judiciary should not in any way be influenced directly or indirectly by the executive. This depends largely on the calibre and strength of the judges themselves and the constitutional provisions made to ensure their independence and freedom of judicial action as is done in Chapter VII of the 1991 Constitution.

Regarding the independence of the judiciary the one issue which has been questioned and which first found its way in the Constitution in 1978 is the creation of a Minister of Justice who is responsible for judicial affairs. It has been queried whether the judiciary really needs a minister, and whether this does not amount to a detraction from the independence of the Judiciary and an unwarranted constraint on the freedom of action of the Judges. An attempt has now been made to address this question in the Working Document on the proposed Constitution for Sierra Leone.

A new element introduced for the first time in the 1991 Constitution was a provision to make the appointment of Judges subject to parliamentary approval.

The Executive

The executive organ of government commonly referred to as "the government" is charged with the execution of the laws made by Parliament; the day-to-day management of the affairs of the state, including its finances and economy, for the good and prosperity of the nation; the maintenance of law, order and the security of the state; and the management of the nation's foreign affairs.

To be able to perform these enormous functions, the Constitution confers wide powers and a large measure of discretion on the Executive.

As long as the executive exercises these powers and discretion within the letter and spirit of the Constitution and for the good of the state, no other organ of the state, the Legislature or Judiciary, can properly interfere. Problems would only arise if the Executive attempts to act unconstitutionally in the sense of not acting within its constitutional mandate.

The structural provision of the Executive in the 1991 Constitution for the due performance of the Executive functions conferred on it is the President as head of the government and head of state, and Cabinet of Ministers and Deputy Ministers appointed by the President and approved by Parliament. There are a number of public officers or civil servants who are government functionaries; some of the principal ones are appointed by the President and approved by Parliament and the rest are appointed by a Public Service Commission.

In relation to the Executive there are two significant features of the 1991 Constitution which are worth mentioning. For the first time no member of the Executive (Minister) is entitled to be a member of the Legislature; and the appointment of Ministers and some principal public officers has been made subject to Parliamentary approval.

The Legislature

The primary duty of the Legislature is to make laws in the manner and within the limits laid down by the Constitution. It has no other authority or person competing with it in this area, but only as long as it acts within the limits of the Constitution. It is in this limited sense that we can talk of the sovereignty of parliament in Sierra Leone.

The 1991 Constitution has dispensed with the provision in earlier Constitutions whereby the President nominated non-elected persons to be members of Parliament. All members of parliament are now elected directly by constituencies which they represent. Parliament therefore performs the role of the collective will of the people. It can impose sanctions on the Executive for not acting in accordance with its mandate and this may even result in a process of impeachment of the President and subsequent removal from office. Parliament alone has the competence to impose taxes and levies and sanction the declaration of war and states of public emergency even though the President has the power to declare them in the first instance.

The Rights and Duties of Citizens

The 1991 Constitution, like most modern Constitutions, outlines clearly the recognized fundamental human rights of the citizens and provides for the protection and

enforcement of these rights by the courts. A number of delineations are imposed on these rights but in essence the provisions help to ensure the freedom and dignity of the citizenry. These rights are not conferred by the state or the Constitution. They are merely recognized by the Constitution and protected by the state. They are said to be rights inherent in man (people) as man (people) have been the subject of various international Conventions and Declarations.

While the Constitution recognizes these fundamental human rights and enshrines them, it also imposes duties and obligations on the citizens as their own contribution towards the good governance of the state. For example, all citizens are required to pay their due taxes, to obey the law of the land and assist in the maintenance of law and order.

Democracy and the Rights of the Individual

DAVID G. THOMPSON

THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution determines the form in which a particular state is organized. It is the basic law of the country; the principles of the constitution determine the nature of the political system and the type of government. A government is said to be democratic if it enjoys the will of the people freely, expressed at a general election.

Although most countries describe themselves as "democratic", in practice however, this means little because the tenets of democracy are not upheld. A democratic government is one elected by the people and whose policies are guided by public opinion.

Government Rest on Consent

The principle that 'Government rest on consent' presumes that citizens can freely elect their representatives through regular, free and fair and competitive elections. The government in power is supposed to be a servant of the people and not the converse.

Public Opinion, Government and National Policy

Democracy produces a government which is readily and freely acceptable by the majority of the electorate. In a democratic system, there exists four main kinds of opinions which guide the smooth running of government. These are:

Majority Opinion

Political organizations fight each other for political power. The party which garners majority votes forms the government and represents the wishes of the majority.

Minority Opinion

The minority, usually represented by the opposition, are the watchdogs who check the

incumbent party's performance in order to prevent them from introducing repressive measures and unpopular policies. This relationship makes it imperative for the majority and minority to work together; differences are talked over not fought over, debate and not violence is the means of determining policy. It is the majority which governs but in doing so recognizes that there are limits to its power and authority. For example, when fundamental liberties are threatened people may not be prepared to submit to majority rule. Democracy tolerates the arguments and wishes of opponents articulated by the opposition who expect that someday, they will be the majority party, with authority to implement their own policies.

Informed Opinion

While it is the majority who decide on the government the impact of different opinions on government action is considerable. The section of the community which comprises informed opinion has an influence which is out of proportion to its size. There are many sources of interests and influences which make it difficult to distinguish between 'informed' and 'uninformed' opinion. But the greater the number of people who can be included in the informed group, the more democratic a country is likely to be.

Group Opinion

People are organized in groups based on common interests. Many of these group interests can be wholly or partly furthered by political action. Examples of these groups are trade unions, employers' organizations and professional associations. These groups exercise political initiatives which are vital for the proper functioning of a true democracy. Since the government derives its authority from the consent of the people, the people should have the capacity to change the government peacefully when they lose confidence in it.

Democracy and Social Order

Democracy promotes political freedom and liberty, a free society with no form of oppression whatsoever. Democracy can be viewed as a system with a rule for fairness. It allows citizens to participate in the political life of their society through, for example, public debates. A democratic system allows for dissenting views; different groups are able to cooperate and compromise thus reducing tensions and confrontations. The people, being an integral part of the system are better able to show respect for the law and legitimate authority as well as for privacy and property.

Instruments Operationalizing Democracy

Democray can only be operational if certain instruments were firmly put in place, namely: the Constitution, an independent judiciary, extended franchise, and a fair and efficient election machinery.

The Constitution

The Constitution is the basic law of a country. It sets down what is expected of the people of a particular country, what their rights are and how the state should be run. The Constitution also states what kind of government a country shall have. The Constitution of a country is very important. It must be used to safeguard and guarantee basic and fundamental rights of the individual. It contains ordinary provisions and entrenched provisions. The ordinary provisions which deal with subjects like the composition and duties of branches of the government can be changed easily by Parliament if the required two-thirds majority of members of parliament is obtained for the proposed changes. The entrenched provisions deal with subjects like fundamental or basic rights and freedoms of the citizens. These provisions cannot be easily changed by Parliament. There is a prescribed procedure to follow to alter an entrenched clause.

The basic and fundamental rights of the individual must be entrenched in the Constitution to make them extremely difficult to alter. Freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and association, protection from arbitrary arrest and detention are rights that shall be guaranteed in the Constitution. Without free elections, the people cannot make a choice of policies. Without freedom of speech the appeal to reason, which is the basis of democracy, cannot be made. Without freedom of association, electors and the elected representatives cannot band themselves into parties. While sufficient power must be granted to enable certain persons to carry on the affairs of the state efficiently, there must be the assurance that such persons can be controlled or removed should they attempt to infringe, beyond the limit considered necessary, upon the liberty of the individual. To achieve this objective, there should be agreed principles and rules determining the structure and powers of government. It is these principles and rules which form the Constitution of the state. The Constitution defines the functions of the different institutions and the distribution of power amongst them.

The form the Constitution takes will depend upon the nature of the country being governed - its history, geographical position, social structure, economic development, religious beliefs and racial composition. But the constitution exists primarily to protect the rights of the citizens and to limit the powers of those entrusted with authority. For a

constitution to sustain the dynamism of human nature, it must:

- be sufficiently flexible to allow for changing economic and social circumstances;
- attract leaders of wisdom and experience to take part in government;
- encourage all participants to work according to the spirit of the Constitution;
- satisfy the needs of the citizens so as to enlist their loyalty; and give protection to minorities.

Independent Judiciary

An independent Judiciary is necessary for a successful democracy. Such a Judiciary can prevent the executive and Legislature from over-stepping their bounds and preventing excesses and abuse of power. An independent Judiciary can prevent any person or a branch of government from threatening or violating citizens rights. Justice is regarded as an end in itself to be determined according to the law and not dictated by the Executive. To achieve this, the independence of judges should be guaranteed by high salaries (to avoid cases of corruption through bribery), security of tenure and the traditions of the legal profession. If democratic government is to be effective and enduring, it is essential that the laws passed by the legislature shall be applied and upheld. There must therefore be courts of law, which command the confidence of the people by their speedy, efficient, firm and impartial dispensation of justice.

Essentials of Judicial Independence

The Judiciary should function separately from the political branches of government. It should be independent of the Executive. Many ordinary citizens will have claims against government departments or the local authority. If these citizens wish to maintain these claims against the officials of government and if the tribunal or court is to command the confidence of the aggrieved citizens it should be composed of men and women who are completely independent. It is imperative therefore, that the Judges are independent of the Executive and free from all controls, implied or expressed. The tenure of Judges should be guaranteed. Salaries of Judges should be fair and fixed and should be free from political control. Appointment of Judges should not be influenced by political considerations.

High standards for selection of Judges should be observed to ensure probity and impartiality. Judicial decisions and court orders must be enforced to secure compliance.

Extended Franchise

The franchise must be based on the principle of "one person, one vote, one value" every person of full age, not subject to a legal disqualification, must have the right to vote. To realize the value and significance of the principle of universal adult suffrage the efficiency of the machinery of government in reflecting public opinion as shown by the ballot box must be enhanced.

The election machinery should make it possible for every grown-up citizen to exercise his or her right to choose the people who make up the government, for democracy cannot be said to be fully realized in a country until all adults enjoy the right to vote.

The election machinery should make it possible for the following to be achieved:-

Periodic Elections by Secret Ballot

There should be opportunities for the electorate to select representatives freely and at reasonable intervals by secret ballot.

Registration of Voters

A country is divided into constituencies. The people in each constituency vote for someone to represent them in the government. In order to vote, a person is required to register as a voter in their constituency. Upon registration, the voter's name is entered in the constituency's electoral register.

Party System

For democracy to take root, the Government policies must reflect the wishes of the electorate; consequently the election machinery must promote a highly developed party system with different political ideologies. General elections will then take the form of a choice between different party programmes. The party winning a majority of seats in parliament forms the Government.

Corrupt and Unlawful Practices

Experience and time have shown that people cheat at elections. The election machinery should have adequate safeguards against such practices so that the results of the elections will give a true reflection of the wishes of the electorate.

With a fair and efficient election machinery the wishes of the people will be reflected at general elections through the ballot box. What will emerge will be a government of the people, for the people and by the people.

Rights

Every citizen has certain legal rights and in turn bound to certain duties. A "legal right" is a claim or a demand made by an individual or institution and which is enforceable by law. A clue to determine what a right is, is by the duty which it imposes. For example a citizen has a right to:-

- elect the government (if an adult);
- get protection for life and property;
- have safeguards for health;
- enjoy the facilities provided for the community.

Correspondingly citizens are under a duty to:

- obey the laws by the government;
- show respect for the rights of others;
- support the government by paying taxes.

To ensure that the rights are meaningful and that duties are discharged, there are mechanisms and institutions which guarantee the exercise of rights and performance of duties.

The Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 Act No.6 of 1991 guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual.

Chapter III of the Constitution deals with "The recognition and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual". These rights are entrenched clauses in the Constitution.

Meaning of Personal Freedom

Every law-abiding citizen is entitled to freedom of thought, speech and movement without let or hindrance from any other person (s). The exercise of personal freedom is conditional on the security of society. The freedom of one person is worth little if he or she can be preyed upon by a murderer. Every society must have the means to protect itself from external aggression. It must have powers of arrest, to search and to imprison those who break the law internally. If those powers are properly exercised, they are by themselves safeguards of freedom.

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Freedom From Arbitrary Arrest

No person shall be arrested except for reasonable cause allowed by law. This principle falls squarely under personal freedom; it is indeed the same principle but it deals with a specific aspect of it, that is, the power of arrest for a criminal offence. It is safeguarded by requiring every person who makes an arrest, whether a policeman or woman or private individual to justify the arrest, if called upon, in a court of law. The laws of Sierra Leone regulate when and how arrests should be made. The police need not only have reasonable suspicion, he or she must prove that the crime or (the felony) had actually been committed.

Freedom From Oppression

Whilst under arrest, no person must be tortured for the purpose of obtaining a confession. It is commonplace to hear people complain that they made their statements under duress. It cannot be denied that in Sierra Leone, past governments habitually used torture as a means to force confessions from prisoners who were accused of treason or other political offences and such statements were used at their trials as means to force disclosure of the names of collaborators.

Freedom of Mind and Conscience

Every person should be entitled to the freedom of worship, free to exercise whatever philosophical inclination, free to hold their own political opinions or beliefs as well as articulate their own view of history. Everyone should be free to think his or her own thoughts, to have his or her own opinions and to give voice to them in public or in private and be free to criticise the government or any party or group of people so long as he or she does not incite anyone to violence. This principle seems obvious but frequently it has brought individuals into conflict with the state or the powers-that-be. The state reserves to itself the right to prevent the expression of views which are subversive of the constitution or a danger to the fabric of society. The major problem is that, the line where criticism ends and sedition begins is very difficult to define. Therefore, freedom of mind and conscience depends on the courts which decide upon it.

Section 28 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone provides for the enforcement of the protective provisions. This means that, whenever any of these basic rights are infringed the aggrieved person may apply to the Supreme Court for redress.

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Civil Rights
These are rights of each citizen to liberty, equality, participation. They include political, economic and cultural rights.

Political Rights
Political rights are those rights of the individual which guarantee the individual to take part in politics, to be involved in issues affecting the state or its government, to discuss and participate in issues of public nature or to engage in civil administration of the country. These rights can be exercised by the citizen in various ways. He or she can form or belong to any political party, trade union or other economic, social or professional association. He or she can vote for any party with a political ideology that he or she supports.

Cultural Rights
These are rights relating to the form or type of civilization of a group of persons. It is freedom from political leaders' interference in the selection, promotion and maintenance of a particular type of civilization akin to any particular group provided it is not against the law of public morality.

Economic Rights
These are rights to earn a living, to engage in profitable commercial venture and also the right to sell one's skills in the open competitive job market. All these rights are, however, not absolute - they must be enjoyed within the limits of the law as provided for by the constitution and other laws of the country.

10

Political Tolerance - A Prerequisite for Enhanced Democracy in a Multi-Party Environment

AHMED RAMADAN DUMBUYA

INTRODUCTION

Since the independence of sub-Saharan African states in the late fifties and early sixties, the political landscape of the continent has been characterized by widespread violence between political opponents, rebellions, *coups d'etat* and the general breakdown of civil order. The causes of these upheavals have been traced to a number of factors with some analysts citing economic mismanagement and corruption. Others have however seen the absence of a culture of tolerance and the refusal of political players to abide by laid down rules of the game and to accept pluralism as an essential feature of contemporary society as the main factors.

Modern pluralist society is a complex web of interlocking relati... between ethnic, religious, racial, regional and economic groups whose members pursue their diverse interests through the medium of private associations. It is based on the premise that man is a political and social animal always seeking to associate with others of the same species with whom he shares similar interests or with whom he has similar needs. Modern society consists of multitudes of social groups each composed of individuals who are associated with one another for common purposes or are bound together because they have similar interests to uphold.

Plato tells us in the "Republic" that the virtue of a thing is that condition which enables it to perform its proper function well. The virtue of a knife is its sharpness, that of a race horse its fleetness of foot. In a similar vein, the virtue of pluralist democracy is tolerance.

In a large society, the multiplicity of groups is essential to the healthy development of the individual but there is a danger in the individual's emotional commitment to his or her primary group. In the words of the sociologist, "in-group" loyalty is the natural accompaniment of "out-group" hostility. The more one says 'we' the more coldly he or

she says "they". Out of the individual strength each draws from his or her group, comes the social weakness of parochial hatred which is to say, intolerance. Unless there is some rational basis upon which competing groups can operate, interaction among them could lead to social chaos.

Tolerance in a society of competing interests is precisely the ungrudging acknowledgement of the right of opposed interests and views to exist and to be pursued. It involves a frame of mind and institutional arrangements which allow for the free association of individuals and their right to pursue their diverse interests according to widely accepted rules of conduct. People must know and accept rules in order to voluntarily comply with them. In a democracy, the relationship between the decision-makers and members of the public must be based on a sense of mutual benefit and the public must be in a position to hold decision-makers to norms of conduct seen to be promoting and maintaining this mutual benefit. Lastly, decision-makers must be willing to accept the establishment and maintenance of non-state actors and other publics with whom they can share power.

Democracy, Political Tolerance and Multi-Party Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which people rule themselves either directly or through representatives. In a democracy, the ruling power of the state is vested in the members of the community wholly rather than in any particular class or classes, and the people control those in authority and have the power to choose them and change them when they fall into disfavour. In a democratic state, the people are sovereign and all powers emanate from them.

The most popular definition of democracy is that of Abraham Lincoln, who described a democratic government as "government of the people, by the people, for the people".

Government of the People

Government is always of the people in the sense that the people who constitute the government are part of the larger community and always claim to act on behalf of the people whether they truly represent them or not.

Government by the People

Government by the people means that the people, either directly or through representatives, govern themselves. In such a state, the voice of the majority is supreme but the views of other important minorities are also respected. There is recognition of

the need for every section of the population to feel that the government functions with due regard for its wishes.

Government for the People

This means that the business of government is conducted in the interest of the entire body of the people in the state. This is necessary if the draw-backs to majority rule are to be overcome and the fears of minority groups are to be allayed.

The original idea of democracy was that all citizens should take part directly in all governmental decisions. Not only is such an ideal impossible to achieve in the modern state, but as far as can be imagined such a system of government would be unstable, inefficient, unmanageable and a hindrance to the development of the society. Secondly, although most people would like to be consulted before decisions are made on national affairs, it is doubtful that everybody would like to be involved at all the stages of governmental work. A democratic government, in the modern sense has therefore come to mean, not direct participation by all the people in the formulation of national policy but rather the choice or election of representatives of the people to undertake this function. Representative democracy is the form of democracy in vogue today. It combines the principles of popular control over policies and officials through representatives elected by the people.

If choice in a democracy means election to a representative assembly, then it is important that the system of election be free and fair. It means that the electorate must make a genuine choice between alternatives and that all candidates are given equal opportunity before the electorate. For the elections to be meaningful and democratic, all the people must have a choice in them and this choice should be expressed in freedom. The holding of elections is not therefore a sufficient test of democracy in itself for there can be elections which are not by the people because the electorate is deliberately limited or divided (as was the case in apartheid South Africa) or because a section of the electorate is intimidated (as happens in states under various forms of dictatorships).

The requirements of democracy outlined here appear to go far beyond the limited notion of democracy as "government by the consent of the governed", which is sometimes put forward. The reason for this is that the initial "consent by the governed" does not prevent a democratically elected government from assuming dictatorial powers. Adolf Hitler, for instance, was democratically elected and he governed, at least at first, with the consent of the governed. But it was the same Hitler who, a few years later, was claiming no responsibility "to the laws of parliamentary usage or to a particular

democratic conception but solely to the mission placed upon him". He then went on to declare any one who tried to interfere with this mission as "an enemy of the people".

The possibility of the evolution of dictatorial rule brings us to another essential aspect of democratic practice. A country that claims to be democratic must have sufficient institutional and constitutional arrangements to prevent a democratically elected government from becoming dictatorial or tyrannical. It must have arrangements for making sure that the government remains responsive to the needs of the people and that it accounts to them for the stewardship of the nation. It is this last requirement of a democratic state that links directly the concept of democracy to that of parliamentary practice. Parliamentary democracy provides a choice which people exercise in terms of electing members to represent them in parliament. In a parliamentary democracy, parliament becomes the focal point for the interaction of the forces of government and democracy. It enables the elected assembly to voice out the grievances of the people and to propose remedies.

It is argued here that these elements of democracy are best maintained in a multi-party democratic environment. Multi-party democracy emphasizes the participation of many political parties and groups in regular, free and fair elections conducted by secret ballot and on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The operation of a multi-party system, apart from being an indication of democracy, may foster closer cooperation among groups and greater positive response from the government. Since the continued existence of the government depends on the support of all the groups and individuals, political leaders must be responsive to the needs of all the groups and seek to reconcile their various interests with those of the state.

Multi-Party Democracy and the Pluralist State

Multi-party democracy may be regarded as a system of government in which the democratic ideal is pursued in an unfettered pluralistic environment. As was mentioned earlier, the modern state is characterized by relations among a multitude of groups each owing allegiance to their primary group as well as to the state. In such an environment, it is folly to set ourselves a political ideal, a state whose members owe their allegiance solely to the state. A fusion of group loyalty with political obligations to the state is only possible when the primary group is identical with the total society - in short, only in a utopian community. In a large society, loyalty to the state must be built upon loyalty to the multiplicity of intra-social groups in which men and women can find face-to-face contacts which sustain their personalities and reinforce their attitudes.

In sub-Saharan Africa the primary group to which members of the public tend to owe primary loyalty is the ethnic group. It has been suggested by some political leaders and political analysts that the operation of a multi-party system in such an environment will give rise to unmitigated tribal warfare since political parties will be based on ethnic affiliation and that such political parties will be tempted to pursue policies largely beneficial to members of their ethnic group at the expense of the larger society.

It is also argued that the population of African states is largely rural and that the colonial rulers created artificial states which indiscriminately lumped together rival tribes and constructed administrative regions tending to reinforce tribal divisions. African politicians are prone to appeal to tribal, ethnic, religious and regional differences which are readily accepted by the rural population.

The multi-party system bequeathed to these states by the colonialists was predominantly the winner take-all type. When a political party dominated by one tribe or religious group wins in a multi-party election, the winner and its supporters take all, removing the losing groups from all position of power and economic activity. Sometimes major groups are excluded from representation in the government and public institutions are made to serve the exclusive interests of governing party supporters thereby undermining the stability of the entire nation.

Political parties in African countries do not generally respect the right of each other to compete for support of the people and regard opponents as enemies who should be destroyed by all means, fair or foul. The mutual respect and tolerance which enables the multi-party system to function well in industrial democracies is not present in Africa. The parties themselves are not democratic and rarely hold internal elections. The leader of the party is invariably identified with the entire party and is not held accountable to the membership.

Opposition parties on their part have tended to be weak and divided. They may tend to attack the personalities of the existing government and to accuse them of oppression, corruption, mismanagement, and the violation of human rights. Rarely do they propose constructive alternative policies.

Finally, the viability of a multi-party system in the current African environment is questioned from an economic perspective - African countries are characterized by widespread poverty, wide income disparities, low levels of literacy, large numbers of peasants and a small literate middle class. It is therefore argued that the socio-economic foundation which supports multi-party systems in developed countries does not exist in Africa. The democratic systems of the developed countries took hundreds of years to

build and have been supported by high standards of living and broad-based market-economic and property owing activities. The multi-party system bequeathed to African countries in the advent of independence has not been successful and in many countries was replaced by single-party regimes. What makes us certain that the system will survive in the future?

In spite of all the arguments for and against multi-party democracy, the overwhelming consensus among African countries is the desirability to move away from single-party authoritarian regimes to multi-party pluralistic systems of government. At the beginning of 1990, only six (Botswana, the Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal and Zimbabwe) out of 53 African countries had multi-party systems. In 1991, another six African countries, (Cape Verde, Benin, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo, Gabon and Zambia) either introduced or reverted to pluralist systems. Today, the vast majority of African countries, with the exception of those under military rule, have reverted to multi-party democracy. Even among the military regimes, the vast majority have elaborate time-tables for returning to civilian democratic pluralistic systems of government.

Political Tolerance in Multi-Party Democratic Pluralist State

To quote Plato again on the virtue of a thing, pluralism is the condition which a modern democratic state must posses in order to function at all, but tolerance is the state of mind which enables it to perform that function well: Tolerance is the antidote to the imperfections of a pluralist democracy and the cure for the ills of a multi-party system in a pluralist environment.

At the personal level, tolerance is the readiness to respect the inviolability of the prime sphere of the individual's existence. A man may choose to wear a beard (or shave one off if others wear them), practice unfamiliar religion, deviate from the sexual norms of his community or in any other way respect the tastes and habits of his community. Liberal democracy demands that society refrain from interfering with these practices either by way of legal or informal social sanctions. The individual is held responsible only in his public activities. The philosophy of tolerance expounded by liberalism leads naturally to an active encouragement of cultural, religious, social and political diversity particularly in an urban setting.

Criticism against this liberal interpretation of tolerance is based on the fear that it may be extended to policies, conditions and modes of behaviour which should not be tolerated because they may impede, if not destroy, the chances of creating a wholesome environment free from fear and misery.

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At the group level, tolerance involves respect for the right of every individual to freely associate with members of his species with whom he or she shares common interests or with whom he or she may be bound by common ties. It accepts the formation of diverse associations of people on the basis of ethnic, religious, economic, social and cultural ties or interests. In Africa political parties are, more often than not based on such associations.

In the context of a pluralist environment, tolerance involves respect for the right of individual groups to compete for political power, to share in the governance of the state and to benefit from the allocation of the resources of the state. Since in Africa, groups of this nature are likely to be based on primary ties, a multi-party system is likely to be dominated by political parties that may be based on primary ties. We are again immediately confronted by the old problem of preventing political competition in such an environment from degenerating into tribal or religious warfare and the task of making allegiance to the primary group compatible with loyalty to the state.

One solution to the problem is to loosen the ties which bind the individual to his ethnic, religious, economic and social group. However, there is a danger in dissolving parochial loyalties because without them people lose their primordial orientation and cannot live. The solution then is to devise a system which sustains parochial loyalties without endangering our loyalty to the state or promoting hostility towards other groups.

Tolerance is seen then as the alternative to the levelling of differences in an amorphous universal brotherhood. It is a willing acceptance, indeed encouragement, of primary group identity. If people can be made to believe that it is positively good for society to contain many faiths, may races, many religions, may styles of life, then healthy consequences of pluralism can be preserved without the sickness of hatred, prejudice and civil strife. The way to achieve this is through political tolerance.

Political Tolerance

Political tolerance is regarded here as the right combination of attitudes of members of a political community and effective institutional and constitutional arrangements which make for the peaceful and regulated interaction among the diverse groups which constitute the society and for the mutual benefit of all. It accepts the difference among groups on the basis of ethnic, religious, economic, social and cultural ties, but encourages and facilitates the formation of other associations based on common interests that may cut across such primary ties.

Political Tolerance and Legitimacy

Democracy and governance are based on the impartial and transparent management of public affairs through the generation of a regime, that is, a set of rules accepted as contributing legimate authority for the purpose of promoting and enhancing societal values sought by groups and individuals. African countries face peculiar problems with regard to establishing legitimate authority. In contemporary Africa, there may be a plurality of "regimes" within a single political system operating on differing sets of rules. Evidence shows that non state publics are often organized around rules of affection and personal relationship rather than on universalistic, legal rationality. In such a system, the key issue is the establishment and maintenance of a common framework for dealing with conflicts arising out of the diversity.

Political tolerance fosters legitimacy by providing an atmosphere for the voluntary acceptance of a common set of rules within which the diverse groups can operate. It allows for the diverse groups to organize and freely express themselves in their organizations and associations thus providing a mechanism through which frustrated and disgruntled members of the group could remove the impediment to their upward mobility without recourse to violence. Official tolerance of the opposition and other parties for example, make it possible for members of the ruling party and their opponents to compete within the framework of common political system and on the basis of agreed rules of political interaction. As long as there are agreed rules for political participation and they are respected by all parties, political competition in a multi-party system has a positive effect.

Political Tolerance and Public Accountability

In a democratic state, the people are sovereign and public officials are answerable to them. "Government by the people" means that the people control their government and that state officials are held accountable for their actions. This is supposed to reduce the incidence of arbitrary actions and corruption. Public accountability implies that clear rules of conduct are known, that competition for positions of authority are permissible and that those judged to violate these rules can be replaced by regular and widely known processes. Accountability therefore suggests the existence of some mechanism through which leaders could be held responsible for using public resources in ways that the members of the public consider legitimate.

Some commentators believe that accountability is best exercised in a tolerant political culture with specific democratic structure such as free, fair and competitive elections.

While it cannot be said that only competitive electoral democracy provides accountability, in a pluralistic environment, however, tolerance of the right for groups to compete for political power on the basis of agreed rules of conduct is the surest way of holding leaders accountable and therefore strengthening democratic practice.

Political Tolerance and Access to Information

Openness with information and transparency in decision-making are vital elements of multi-party democracy because they are essential to the establishment of legitimate authority and the accountability of the leadership. Unless there is tolerance for other state actors to have access to information about official activities, non-state actors will not be in a position to control or limit such illegimate and irresponsible behaviour as corruption.

Information openness is defined as the right and ability of members of the public to know whether those in authority are conforming to the norms and how well they are responding to public demands. This involves firstly the existence of the means by which non-state actors could know the basis of decision-making and whether it is being respected in practice. Secondly, it involves a movement towards freer mass media through which information about compliance or non-compliance with norms can be transmitted to other non-state actors.

In Africa, the state and its leadership often attempt to monopolize and dominate the mass media in order to limit competition and accountability. State-run or state-financed mass media could never provide open information that could make accountability effective and competition fair. Political tolerance in the area of information openness requires a movement towards non-state and private ownership of the media and towards an improved "enabling environment" for media operation. The property rights of media owners as well as the civil rights of media transmitters should also be respected. Tolerance for unfettered media competition could enhance transparency and accountability in government thus creating a vibrant enabling environment for multi-party competition.

Political Tolerance and the Promotion of Civil Society

Democracy entails the full participation of all groups in the political system. Tolerance of the participation of groups other than the central government is both a characteristic of democracy and of good governance. It enables other actors, particularly non-state actors, to develop rules and manage and distribute resources in a relationship of

exchange with state institutions. This notion of tolerance could be equated with "empowered participation". It is not just the right of individuals to take part in state functions and activities, it is the right to share in governance. Without this sharing, responsiveness and accountability would merely be a matter of enlightened or benevolent action on the part of state officials.

The maintenance of a democratic system depends on the willingness of state actors to accept the establishment and maintenance of non-state public actors even when these actors have different interests or perspectives from those of the leaders. Tolerance for other groups and non-state actors is therefore the basis for countervailing power or political competition which appears vital to the promotion of a responsive and accountable political system. Consequently, tolerance of other publics involves the acceptance of decentralisation of some functions, the sharing of political power and the creation of an enabling environment for non-state actors. Together, these publics and the state must develop a set of rules that assure all publics, including potential competitors of political rights, minimally, the right to associate freely. Without the assurance of, at least minimal human rights, civil society may not be able to defend its interests, be sustained or play a role in holding the community together.

In the African context, where a variety of actors with differing concepts of democracy and rules of governance co-exist, the acceptance of competition and guarantee of right for others poses certain problems. This is where civic education should come in. The state should take the lead in elaborating norms of democracy, governance and tolerance which are then transmitted through civic education to the rest of the society. From this perspective, the promotion of minimum human rights associated with the right to organize and to be free from arbitrary sanctions for opposition to public officials is an essential function of pluralism and is intimately linked to the promotion of meaningful civil society.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that the operation of a multi-party political system in a pluralistic setting is fraught with real dangers. In Africa, political parties are often based on ethnic and regional affinities and the socio-economic foundation supportive of multi-party pluralism is barely in existence. Many of the governments are overly centralised and there is very little power-sharing between the central authorities and other non-state actors.

The promotion of political tolerance is seen precisely as a measure for mitigating many

of the dangers inherent in a pluralistic setting. Many of the problems of multi-party democracy in a pluralistic environment arise from the existence of several publics within a single political system each with its own loyalty, set of rules and perspective of interests. Political tolerance also promotes civil society in a climate of multi-party democracy by fostering the elaboration of a minimum common regime (set of rules) on the basis of which all the groups within the polity could interact with one another without recourse to violence.

By upholding the right of all groups to take part in the political system and by creating an enabling environment for other actors to hold public officials accountable, political tolerance provides a basis for good governance and ensures that the resources of the state are utilized for the mutual benefit of all. This is likely to reinforce the confidence of non-state actors in the authorities of the central government and to facilitate the transfer of loyalty from parochial bodies to the state.

Political tolerance also promotes the opening of barriers to information. Information is seen as a controlling factor in a pluralistic environment and unless the right to know is guaranteed and information about the activities of government officials is available, public officials cannot be held accountable for their actions. Political tolerance implies unfettered access to information and the free operation of private mass media.

Civic education is seen to have a very important role in promoting political tolerance, for in the final analysis, it is no use elaborating common regimes and establishing structures of empowerment if the knowledge about their existence and use is not shared by the larger public. The promotion of political tolerance must therefore go hand in hand with the strengthening of civic-education.

11

Meaning and Nature of Government

WALTER N. DAVIES & PETER O. KOROMA

MEANING OF GOVERNMENT

Government is a constitutionally formed body which is responsible for directing the affairs of a state in the name of its citizens. It can also be defined as "a body of people and institutions that make and enforce laws for a particular society". One of the most unique aspects of government is that no two governments are identical.

Governments are usually elected by their people and once elected are duty bound to be accountable to them. However, there have been cases where people have seized power through unconstitutional means such as *coup d'etats* or revolutions. The international community is discouraging the seizure of power by unconstitutional means because the rulers who emerge are usually undemocratic. In a democracy a government is regulated by the constitution which lays down the rules by which a government operates. The constitution does not allow a government to govern as it pleases. The government must obey the constitution at all times. The government is not the state; it is merely the machinery by which the state maintains its existence.

The Need for a Government

The people of a state cannot live merely by and for themselves without laws, for such a situation would breed lawlessness, insecurity of life and property, and the possibility of external aggression. The establishment of a government results from the need for a settled way of life. It also entails the setting up of rules or laws for the benefit of the community.

Throughout history people have lived in communities because of the belief that they were more likely to achieve happiness within their communities than when they were alone. In the early stages of civilization people developed forms of tribal 'governments' which regulated their relationships to their chiefs, their religions and social customs and

the use of tribal lands. Later, city states like those of Greece emerged followed by great states like the Chinese and Roman Empires which developed more complicated systems of government.

People are also drawn together for economic and political reasons. The need to cater for the general welfare and for the benefit of all necessitates rules and regulations to determine how communities shall be organized and governed. These rules or laws prescribing how a state or community is to be governed are known collectively as "constitution".

Government is necessary in a state because, according to Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth century political philosopher, without it, the life of man could "be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". Hobbes believed that without government there would be chaos and disorder.

According to John Locke, another seventeenth century writer, government ought to be based on the consent of the governed and that consent could always be withdrawn.

It is important to note that in the liberal democracies of the West, the governments are usually accountable to the people and can be removed by them.

Purpose of Government

Government maintains order in society. It organizes a society in which citizens are expected to live peacefully. This is achieved through the establishment of a framework of peace to facilitate development. This framework includes law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system.

Another important role of government is to raise revenue. Revenue is realized through taxation - direct and indirect taxes such as income tax, sales tax and value added tax. The money collected is used to maintain the defence system, social welfare, provision of education, health services, housing and insurance schemes, old age pensions and retirement benefits.

Government is responsible for creating an enabling environment for industrial development, development of agriculture, provision of infrastructure, roads, railways, bridges, airlines, telecommunications, electricity and water supply; generating employment opportunities, control of money supply through the Central Bank, and control of internal and external trade. (US president) Bill Clinton's statement on the purpose of government is instructive:

I believe the role of government is to help create good jobs; to increase our

security at home and abroad; to reform government, making it smaller and less bureaucratic; to demand more personal responsibility from all our citizens and most important to expand education and training so that all our citizens have the chance to make the most of their lives

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT

The relationship between the people and the government should be cordial and based on mutual respect. The government should always work in the interest of the people at all times. It is the right of the people to choose those who will make up their own government in free and fair elections. The government should ensure that the welfare of the people is protected and should be accountable to the people by consulting them before major decisions are taken and explaining why certain other decisions were taken. A good working relationship between the government and the people is a basis for partnership and for progress

Forms of Government

There are various forms of government that are in operation in different states in the world. These forms of government represent different ways of governing. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, there has been disagreement among political observers in distinguishing states according to their forms of government. Some political observers believe that states may be classified according to the distribution or location of political power within them.

Early Attempts at Classification of Government

One of the earliest attempts at classification of government was made by Aristotle the ancient Greek political philosopher. He distinguished states ruled by one person, a few and then many. He argued that part of his intention was to assess different types of rules, describing them as tyrannies when they existed in their perverted form or as oligarchies or democracies. He also argued that the various forms of government whether monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy or democracy did not exist in their pure forms

Monarchy as a Form of Government

This is a system of government in which the formal head of state is a king, queen or emperor. They usually inherit their positions by birth. There are two types of monarchy viz;

- *Constitutional or Limited Monarchy*: A system in which the monarch performs mainly ceremonial functions. The Queen of Britain and the Emperor of Japan perform such ceremonial functions as reading the speech from the throne, receiving ambassadors from foreign countries.
- *Absolute Monarchy*: A system in which the monarch wields absolute or autocratic powers, examples being the king of Saudi Arabia and the Emir of Kuwait.

The monarchy has come under increasing criticism in recent years. Critics argue that it is an expensive institution to manage and is undemocratic since the monarch is not elected by the people. The recent scandals involving members of the Royal Family in Britain has put the institution in the spot light.

Democracy

Democratic governments have the following features:

- Government by Majority: The party which wins the majority of seats in the legislature forms the government, which in theory should recognise the views of the minority.
- Pluralism: There should be two or more political parties to enhance political competition.
- People's participation: The people should be free to participate in the political process.
- Regular, free and fair elections: Free and fair elections should be held regularly and should be based on universal adult suffrage that is, all qualified adults who have attained the legal age should be allowed to vote. In Sierra Leone the voting age is 18 years.
- Sovereignty of the People: In a democracy, power lies ultimately with the people.
- The Rule of Law must Prevail: There should be supremacy of the law, equality, independence of the judiciary, protection of basic fundamental human rights such as freedom of speech, movement, and association; The mass media should be free to criticise the government as well as to inform and educate the people.

Republican Government

A Republican form of government is a government in which the head of state is not a monarch, but usually a president. It is a government in which sovereign power resides

in the electorate and is exercised by elected officials and representatives responsible to them and who govern according to the law.

When Sierra Leone attained independence in 1961, the Constitution was monarchial and parliamentary. The head of state was the Queen of Great Britain represented by the Governor-General and the head of Government was the Prime Minister. After Sierra Leone attained republican status in 1971, the head of state then became a President.

Presidential System of Government

A presidential system of government is one in which full executive power is vested in the president who is usually head of state and head government.

Separation of powers

The presidential system of government is based on the system of separation of powers and checks and balances. Under the 1991 multi-party constitution of Sierra Leone, executive powers are vested in the President, legislative power in Parliament and judicial power in the Judiciary which is headed by the Chief Justice. Ministers are appointed outside Parliament but if a member of Parliament is appointed as a Minister he or she must resign from his or her parliamentary seat.

This system has the following features:

- Appointments and treaties signed by the President must be approved by Parliament.
- The President is elected by the total electorate for a fixed period, for example in Sierra Leone, the President is elected for five years and cannot serve more than two five year terms. In the USA, the President is elected for four years and cannot serve for more than two four year terms.
- The President cannot dissolve the legislature and call a general election. Usually the president and the legislature are elected for a fixed term. In Sierra Leone, both the President and members of Parliament are elected for five years. In the USA members of the senate are elected for six years, one-third of the members are elected every two years. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years.
- There is no strict party discipline as in a cabinet system. This is due to the system of separation of powers and checks and balances. In the USA for example, the members of the Democratic Party in congress could vote against a measure introduced by a President of the Democratic Party.
- There is no collective responsibility. Members of the President's cabinet are usually

responsible to him and not to the legislature.

Parliamentary System of Government

This is a system of government in which there is a titular head of state who wields mainly ceremonial powers and a head of government who wields executive powers, for example, in Britain, the monarch is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government. In Sierra Leone under the Independence Constitution of 1961 the head of state was the Queen represented by the Governor General, and the head of government was the Prime Minister. The parliamentary system of government has the following features:

- Power Sharing: Power is usually shared between two persons, the head of state and head of government.
- Fusion of Power: There is usually a fusion of powers between the executive and legislative organs of government. Members of the cabinet are not only members of the legislature but they also initiate most of the bills passed in parliament.
- Power of the Prime Minister: Real power is vested in the hands of Prime Minister who is not only a member of Parliament but also usually the leader of the majority party in parliament. He can however be removed by the legislature by a 'vote of no confidence'.
- The Prime Minister is not usually elected directly by the entire electorate. It is only in Israel that provision is made for a direct election of prime minister.
- In theory Ministers are appointed by the head of state, but in reality it is the Prime Minister who chooses his team of ministers and assigns them to various departments and ministries. Their names are then submitted to the head of state for approval.
- The Prime Minister is 'primus inter pares' (first among equals) in relation to his cabinet colleagues. He is the chairman of the cabinet and directs overall policy formulation and execution.
- There is usually an official opposition in Parliament. The opposition forms a 'shadow cabinet' to examine the government policies in the legislature. If the opposition wins a general election and forms the government, members of the shadow cabinet are expected to become ministers.
- Members of the cabinet are collectively responsible to parliament for policy. In theory if the government is defeated on one aspect of its policy the whole

government falls and not merely the minister.

- There is strict party discipline since members of Parliament are expected to support their parties in the legislature.
- Parliamentary democracies with a multi-party system are usually unstable because of the frequency of elections and frequent changes of government.

Military Government

A military government is one in which the military seizes power, usually through a *coup d'etat*, and establishes a military 'junta' or council. The first military *coup d'etat* in Africa took place in Egypt when the army overthrew King Farouk in 1952. The first military *coup d'etat* in West Africa occurred in Togo in 1963 when President Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated. There have also been *coups* in Sudan (1958) and in the Congo (1960).

These events have had a serious impact on Africa as they opened the floodgates of military takeovers. More *coup d'etat* followed. In Sierra Leone the army entered politics in March 1967, with the military intervention by Brigadier David Lansana. This was followed a few days later by the seizure of power led by the army which established the National Reformation Council (NRC) under Colonel Juxon-Smith. The NRC ruled from March 1967 to April 1968. It was overthrown by the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM) under warrant officers Patrick Conteh and Ensadu Rogers. Within nine days of this coup Siaka Stevens, the leader of the All Peoples Congress Party, was reappointed Prime Minister to head a national government. In April 1992, the army again sized power from APC and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). On the 25th of May 1997 the elected civilian government was overthrown by the military and a ruling military council established.

Various reasons have been advanced by the military for intervention in politics. These include: economic mismanagement by civilian government; violation of the spirit and letter of the constitution; bribery and corruption; tribalism and nepotism; rigging of elections; suppression of the opposition; widespread violation of human rights by some civilian government.

Some factors which led to military interventions include: foreign influences; political ambition of military personnel/greed for power; poor salary and conditions of service of military personnel; preferential treatment given to presidential guard in the form of higher salaries and better conditions of service.

Strangely, the reason given by the military for the overthrow of the elected civilian government in Sierra Leone in May, 1997 was the unacceptable nature of the 'brand' of democracy that the February 1996 elections ushered in.

Military governments have the following characteristics:

- They usually seize power by unconstitutional means, that is, by force;
- suspend the constitution, dissolve parliament and ban all political parties and activities;
- establish military councils after seizing power, for example, the National Provisional Ruling Council in Sierra Leone;
- rule by decree i.e. by edicts which have the force of law;
- are usually dictatorships;
- usually no clear-cut separation of the executive, legislative and judicial organs of government;
- military tribunals or commissions of inquiry are usually established to try opponents of the regime particularly former civilian politicians;
- civilian politicians are detained for long periods without trials;
- civilian advisers used to help run the national and local administration;
- widespread violation of human rights - suppression of political opponents, press censorship, government interference with the judiciary and extra judicial executions;
- economic mismanagement;
- bribery and corruption;
- excessive spending on the military. A large percentage of the budget is allocated for defence;
- instability - there are usually frequent take over attempts and counter *coups d'etat*.

What Should the Role of the Military Be?

It is a constitutional fact that the primary function of the military is not to govern, but to defend the state from external aggression, assist the police in maintaining internal peace and stability in case there is a breakdown of social cohesion. Any group of military personnel who overthrow a legally constituted democratically elected government commits nothing less than high treason against the state.

To achieve its set goals and objectives, the military must be: professional, well trained, disciplined and with high morale, well equipped, politically and civic educated about their role in society and highly motivated.

The military should support governments in Africa and render total support for the development of a democratic culture.

Oligarchy

An oligarchy is a government which is dominated by a few people who rule the country for their own self interests and private gains. Aristotle, the Greek Philosopher, used the term 'oligarchy' to designate the rule of the few when it was exercised not by the best, but by bad men unjustly. The Italian political scientist Gaetano Mosca, believed that a 'ruling class' always constituted the effective oligarchical control.

Vilfredo Pareto elaborated the idea in his doctrine of the 'elite'. This doctrine, predated Marx and Engels who employed the term 'elite' to describe the class of conscious communists, the leading group within the proletariat.

It is important to note that the type of power held by the leader of a democratic party is quite different from that of the leader of the single party in an authoritarian system. Leaders of democratic parties could be removed by popular votes but is usually difficult to remove leaders of authoritarian parties because they are not elected democratically.

Most of the single parties and military regimes in Africa are regarded as oligarchical because power is usually in the hands of a few people. This form of government is dangerous because it is inherently unstable. It is a form of government which the emerging African states should strive to avoid.

Dictatorship

A dictatorship is a government in which total power is in the hands of one person, the dictator. It is usually divided into left wing and right wing dictatorships. Hitler in Nazi Germany and Mussolini in Fascist Italy are usually regarded as right wing dictators because their dictatorship was based on extreme nationalism. Stalin in the former USSR and Mao Tse Tung in China are regarded as left wing dictators because their dictatorship was based on a political ideology of communism/socialism.

Examples of notorious dictators in Africa in recent times were Idi Amin of Uganda; Jean Bedel Bokassa of then Central African Empire; Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea; Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia.

A dictatorship is a bad form of government because it is undemocratic and brutal.

Dictatorships are characterized by the absense of freedom: there is usually no free press, the citizens rights and freedoms are non-existent and the executive has an almost absolute control over the legislature and the judiciary. Political opponents are usually detained without trial and the country's resources are wasted on the security apparatus of spies, paramilitary forces and the army.

12

Politics, Political Literacy & Political Participation

EDWARD D. A. TUKAY

The word "Politics" was first used by the Greeks, though politics or political activity is found in every society. Politics did not start in Greece. The word 'politics' originates from the Greek word 'POLIS' which means 'city - state'. To the Greeks, the city was the entire state, and the subject that deals with the affairs of the city-state was called politics.

Today, however, the nation-state has replaced the city-state; one might be right to say that politics deals with the affairs of the nation-state. Following are some of the meanings of 'politics'.

Politics is the Study of the Nation-State

The state is a group of people living in a definite geographic area, having a system of government but subject to no outside control.

The characteristics of a nation-state are: territory, population, government, and independence and Sovereignty.

Politics is the Study of Power

Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others. Wherever power is involved, there is politics.

Politics is the Study of Government

Government is an organization of people who make, execute, and enforce laws in a society. The three main organs of government are: Legislative, Executive and Judiciary

Politics is the study of how values (wealth, honour, prestige etc) are distributed or allocated in society - "Who gets what, when and how."

Politics is a Dirty Game

This definition is associated with the Italian thinker Machiavelli, who advocated the use of any means to achieve political objectives - power, force, violence, persuasion, deception.

A simple working definition of politics is:

> *Politics deals with how disagreements and conflicts are settled or resolved in society. That is to say, it is about collective decision making concerning the fate of a whole society. Thus politics is about Participation in deciding the fate of an entire society.*

Politics can take place at the local, national, and international levels. Examples of political activities include:

- voting, elections
- demonstrations, riots
- political discussions
- campaigning

Although politics has several meanings, the way it is practiced in developed societies is different from politics in developing societies. This is due to many factors including:

- level of development
- differences in history and culture;

Politics in pre-colonial Africa is different from politics in Post-colonial Africa.

Pre-colonial African Politics

The African societies were still political even before colonialism. Politics was conducted through indigenous African institutions; Chieftaincy, council of elders, secret societies, age grades, the family. The political system was either centralized or decentralized. It was based on kinship and lineage.

In Sierra Leone under British indirect rule, the city of Freetown and the provinces were administered differently. Freetown practised the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy and the provinces were ruled through existing institutions - chieftaincy. The district commissioners and district officers supervised the system at this level.

Post-Colonial African Politics

The colonial administrators rearranged the mode of governance from the more traditional institutions to the existing ones, viz, Legislative, Executive, Judiciary, Civil Service, Electoral Commission, Army.

Politics in Africa Today

African politics has been characterized by poor leadership, poor governance, authoritarianism and lack of democracy. As a result there is lack of sustainable socio-economic development. There is also seemingly unresolvable conflicts.

The characteristics of post-colonial African politics include: bad governance, corruption, ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, sectionalism, regionalism.

Literacy and Politics

Literacy is the ability to read and write and goes to a very large extent to influence politics. Being able to read and write influences how decisions are taken in society, how voting is conducted, how service in the forces is determined, conducting demostrations, among others. In short literacy can either promote or hinder political activities.

Literacy can be used to promote political activities when it increases our understanding about such political activities as voting, political discussions, policy-making, campaigning, human rights and civic Education

Civic Education

Civic education is the process of nurturing responsible citizens and leaders in society. It is an educational process which produces enlightened citizens and good leaders in a society. It involves teaching people about their rights, duties, and obligations in society. It is an important tool for building a stable democracy and good governance. Its content embraces:

- Political education - knowing about politics, government, human rights;
- Gender education - knowing about the relationship of the sexes;
- Education about the economy, society and culture; and
- Environmental education.

The ultimate aim of civic education is the attainment of a responsible citizenship and nurturing responsible leadership in a progressive society.

Political Participation in Sierra Leone

In order for us to understand how men and women participate in politics in Sierra Leone, we must first of all try to understand what political participation is. We must also try to know the factors that influence political participation in general and in Sierra Leone in particular. After this, we should then be able to understand the role of women, and the military officials in the politics of Sierra Leone before and after the transition to democracy in March 1996.

What is Political Participation?

In ordinary sense, participation means to take part in, be actively involved or have a share in an activity. It is a voluntary process.

Political participation, therefore, is the voluntary process of taking part in political activities such as voting in an election, campaigning, discussing political issues, being involved in demonstrations, taking part in making the laws, serving in the military or police forces.

In a democratic society, all citizens should participate in political activities. In a totalitarian or authoritarian society, only a few people participate in politics as a result of many inhibiting factors.

Factors that Influence Participation in Politics

There are several factors that influence political participation in any society, whether developing or developed. These factors may include: age, socio-economic status, religion, party affiliation, nature of the political system, for example, whether democratic or authoritarian, ethnicity, education/literacy, sex and region.

Political Participation in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, however, the salient factors that have determined participation in politics are: education/literacy, gender, ethnic identities, socio-economic status and region (west/east/south/north)

Gender and Politics

In the colonial period and immediately after, the Creoles dominated the political scene. Most of them served in the Legislative and Executive Councils. Later the Mendes displaced the Creoles when the SLPP came to power in the 1960s. However, with the introduction of APC and one party politics, the Temnes and then later the Limbas were

very active in Sierra Leone politics under Siaka Stevens and Joseph Saidu Momoh. The government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah brought together the different ethnic groups in what could be described as a government of national unity.

Education and Politics

Those who could read and write, or better still, those who have acquired higher academic credentials had more chance to participate than others.

Women and Politics in Sierra Leone

Feminist consciousness has spread in Sierra Leone like in other developing parts of the world. Women now participate actively in political activity. This is a result of many factors which include the fact that people are now beginning to feel that women and men have equal rights to be involved in the development process in society, and politics is one such process. Another factor is that Sierra Leoneans have awakened to the idea that democracy is a good system for the development of society and everybody has an equal chance of participating in politics, regardless of gender or social status.

Women's Role During the Transition

Before the transition, from a military to a civilian form of governance, women's participation in political affairs was minimal. When NPRC took over power on April 29, 1992, their aim was to conclude the rebel war, resettle displaced people and return the country to democracy. To achieve this goal, institutions such as the National Advisory Council (NAC), Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) were created.

They also provided room for many civil organizations to be formed. Women's organizations such as SILWODMA - Sierra Leone Women Development Movement emerged. These women's groups became very active in the transition period. Women started holding sensitization workshops, raising the women's awareness on their need to participate in politics and development. For instance women played a significant role in the national consultative conferences popularly called Bintumani I and Bintumani II. These conferences were called in order to determine whether elections should be held as stipulated by chairman of INEC, James Jonah, inspite of the ongoing rebel war that almost consumed the entire country. While most people were in favour of elections before peace, Women in Sierra Leone demostrated and demanded that peace should be achieved first before elections.

Holding of the elections were finally conducted before this condition was met, but the active role of women was felt throughout the country.

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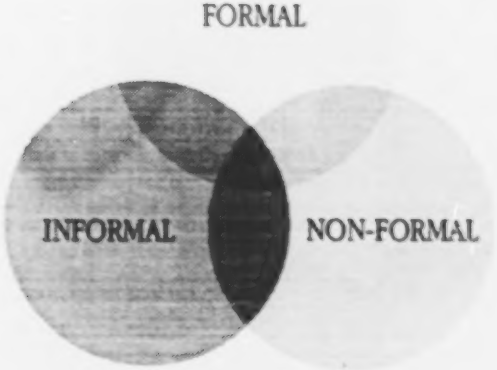
Curriculum for Civic Education

EKUNDAYO J. D. THOMPSON & JOSEPH SIMEHA

RATIONALE FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

Civic Education is a component of non-formal education. It has a needs-based audience and seeks to fill in gaps left by formal education. Non-formal education is organized, has a flexible structure, addresses the learning needs of the clientele outside the formal system of education and includes adults, young persons and children.

Figure 2: Formal-Non-formal-Informal Interface



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Non-formal education uses instructional methods such as focus group discussion, dialogue, role-play, drama, case study, critical incidence, analysis, diagnosis, debate, presentation/lecture.

The non-formal method of facilitating civic education is preferred due to the:

- large unschooled/illiterate population;
- high drop-out rate from the formal school system;
- new and emerging learning needs;
- limited access to formal education;
- rapid technological development;
- flexibility of non-formal education structure;
- persistent problems of development;
- its responsiveness to political and economic changes;
- it addresses the problems, needs, challenges and opportunities arising from political pluralism and economic liberalisation.

The table below is a problems - needs - challenges matrix which provides a rationale for civic education and political literacy.

Table 1: Problems - Needs - Challenges: The Role of Civic Education and Political Literacy

Problems	Needs	Challenges
Dictatorial leadership style	Democratic style of leadership	Transition from single to multi-party system of governance
Corruption	Accountability and Transparency	Creation of support systems & structures for accountability & transparency
Culture of silence	To empower people to act individually and collectively	Recognize injustice and assert rights
Discrimination	Creation of equal opportunities	Re-organization of social structures
Nation building	To build a nation	Building a Nation out of diverse cultures, structures, ideologies and ethnic groups

PROBLEMS	NEEDS	CHALLENGES
Irresponsible citizenship	Responsible citizenry	Create a culture of responsible citizenship
Poverty	Alleviate and eradicate poverty	Empower people towards self-development and create enabling socio-economic environment to facilitate peoples aspirations
Individualism	Communalism	Creation of community support systems
Moral decadence	Re-establish moral authority	Strengthening institutuions that promote moral values

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Goal

An informed citizenry who actively and responsibly participate in the processes of good governance and attainment of sustainable development.

General Objective

To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values for informed participation in the affairs of society.

Specific Objectives

At the end of the instructional process beneficiaries of civic education should be able to:-

- Identify the problems which impede good governance and sustainable development.
- Analyse the nature and causes of the problems of bad governance and suggest solutions for them.
- Discourage and progressively discard practices that impede good governance and sustainable development.
- Promote equal participation in societal processes for all, regardless of gender, ethnic, racial and religious considerations.
- List activities that lead to informed decisions and choices.

- Identify the fundamental and individual rights.
- Suggest means of demanding, promoting and protecting fundamental and individual rights.
- Discuss the global economic trends and their effects on the local economic situation.
- Discuss the causes of poverty and suggest ways of alleviating poverty.
- Identify and utilize the services of institutions that promote self-determination and positive group identity.
- Discuss the need for cultural diversity and suggest ways of promoting cultural interaction.
- Identify and discuss the moral values and issues that enhance commitment for truth, human rights and justice.

Table 2: Core-Curriculum

Content (core)	Instructional Method	Evaluation	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
Responsible citizenship/membership	Role play, popular theatre, case study, critical incident, debate, lecture - discussion, experience sharing	Survey of participants' opinions and views. Participant observation	Nature and level of participation. Number of participants
Good governance	As above	As above	Level of accountability and transparency. Quality and quantity of service delivery. System efficiency and effectiveness. Separation of powers. Quality of representation
Civic rights and obligations (fundamental and individual)	As above	As above	Respect and commitment to safeguard life. Level of knowledge about exercise of rights. Respect and commitment to individual and collective responsibility. Level of knowledge of responsibility. Demand of rights.

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Content (core)	Instructional Method	Evaluation	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
Democratic practices	Role play, popular theatre, case study, critical incident, debate, lecture - discussion, experience sharing	Survey of participants' opinions and views. Participant observation	Regular, free, fair elections. Quality of electoral process. Quality of representation. Quality of voter education. Exercise of right to vote and to be voted for.
Political Tolerance	As above	Analysis of cases of political tolerance. Analysis of conflict resolution processes	Number of cases on political tolerance. Number of successful conflict resolution cases

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Abbreviations

AAEA	African Adult Education Association
AALAE	African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
DVV	German Adult Education Association
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
INSTADEX	Institute of Adult Education & Extra-Mural Studies
JFS	Joint Funding Scheme
CEDNET	Community Education and Development Network
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PLACE	Political Literacy and Civic Education

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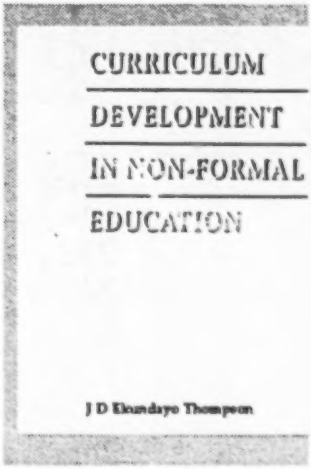
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

By Ekundayo J D Thompson

Published in 1995 by African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
ISBN 9966 9901 2 7; 111pp; Price: US $8



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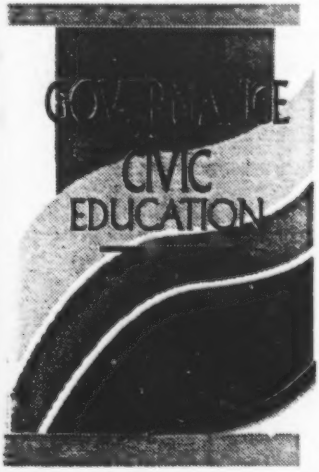

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC EDUCATION

By Ekundayo J D Thompson

Published in 1997 by Adult Education for Development
ISBN 9966 9612 1 6; 120pp Price: US $6

This book is a collection of papers which have emerged from civic education processes in Sierra Leone and Kenya. It addresses issues ranging from the concept of civic education to political tolerance, politics, political literacy and political participation. The book is edited against the background of community education and empowerment which provides it's context.

The book is compulsory reading not only to civic educators and civic education practitioners, but also to every individual citizen on whom the burden of political choice and destiny lies.

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The book emerges from the dynamic social, economic and political processes in Sierra Leone and Kenya. In Sierra Leone, the Political Literacy and Civic Education Project which was its catalyst, was sponsored by the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) through the International Community Education Association (ICEA).

Modern pluralist society is a complex web of interlocking relations between ethnic, religious, racial, regional and economic groups whose members pursue their diverse interests through the medium of private associations.

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